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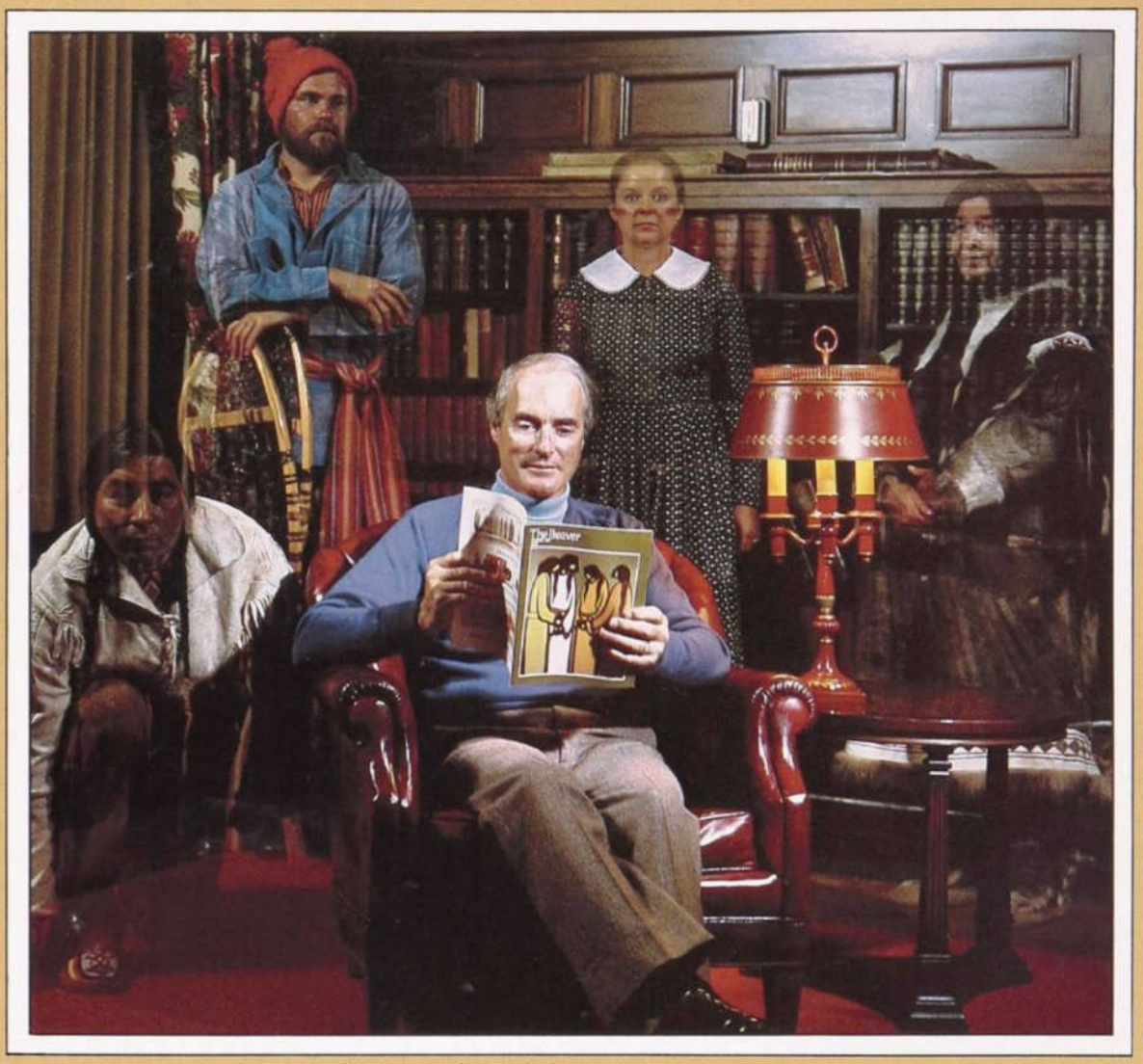

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MAGAZINE OF THE NORTH

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Woman of the hard North — Ernest C. Oberholtzer

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Voyage to Nutheltin

By R.H. Cockburn

In 1912 Ernest Oberholtzer and Billy Magee stepped off the map into a spectacular adventure. This article is based on Oberholtzer's lost journal found in an attic at Rainy Lake seventy one years later.

By 1912, the great age of land explorations had receded into history. A few parts of the world — among them darkest Amazonia, the headwaters of the Orinoco, the interiors of New Guinea, Borneo, Waziristan, Arnhem Land — would remain unseen by white men for some time to come. Australia's Simpson Desert, blistering in the centre of its continent, awaited Edmund Colson, who, in 1936, would be the first to cross it. And not until after the 1939-45 War would Wilfred Thesiger make his heroic traverses of Arabia's Empty Quarter, the last exploratory journeys of significance unaided by machines or technology. Like Africa and Central Asia earlier, most of these regions were as atmospherically exciting to the public as they were compelling for other reasons to geographers, scientists, and anthropologists. Formidable in their physical obstacles — jungles, mountains, sand seas — isolated from European and North American cultural influences, their inhabitants colourful, mysterious, and often enough dangerous, these places were exotic and alluring.

Northern Canada, by comparison, aroused no such fascination. Its natives were familiar and pacific, its animals known, its terrain, east of the Mackenzie, monotonous; here no creeper-tangled ruins of lost cities awaited the archaeologist, no poisoned dart from a blowgun the canoeman. That huge areas of the water-mazed, fly-ridden North were still unmapped and untravelled interested few persons other than prospectors and the men serving with the Geological Survey of Canada and the Topographical Survey. Guy Blanchet of the T.S.C., who explored much of the country east of the Slave River and who discovered the sources of the Back and Coppermine rivers in the 1920s, won little renown in his lifetime and today is all but forgotten. Even the extraordinary late-nineteenth century journey of A.P. Low in the Labrador peninsula and J.B. Tyrrell in the Barren Lands go unmentioned in histories of world exploration and, more deplorably, are unknown to nearly all Canadians. Of those who preceded Low, Tyrrell, and other redoubtable G.S.C. surveyors, only the names of Mackenzie and, to a lesser degree, Hearne are still widely recognized. It was Arctic, not sub-Arctic, voyages, searches by ship rather than by canoe, that won headlines, spawned book upon book, and left a lasting impression on the public imagination.

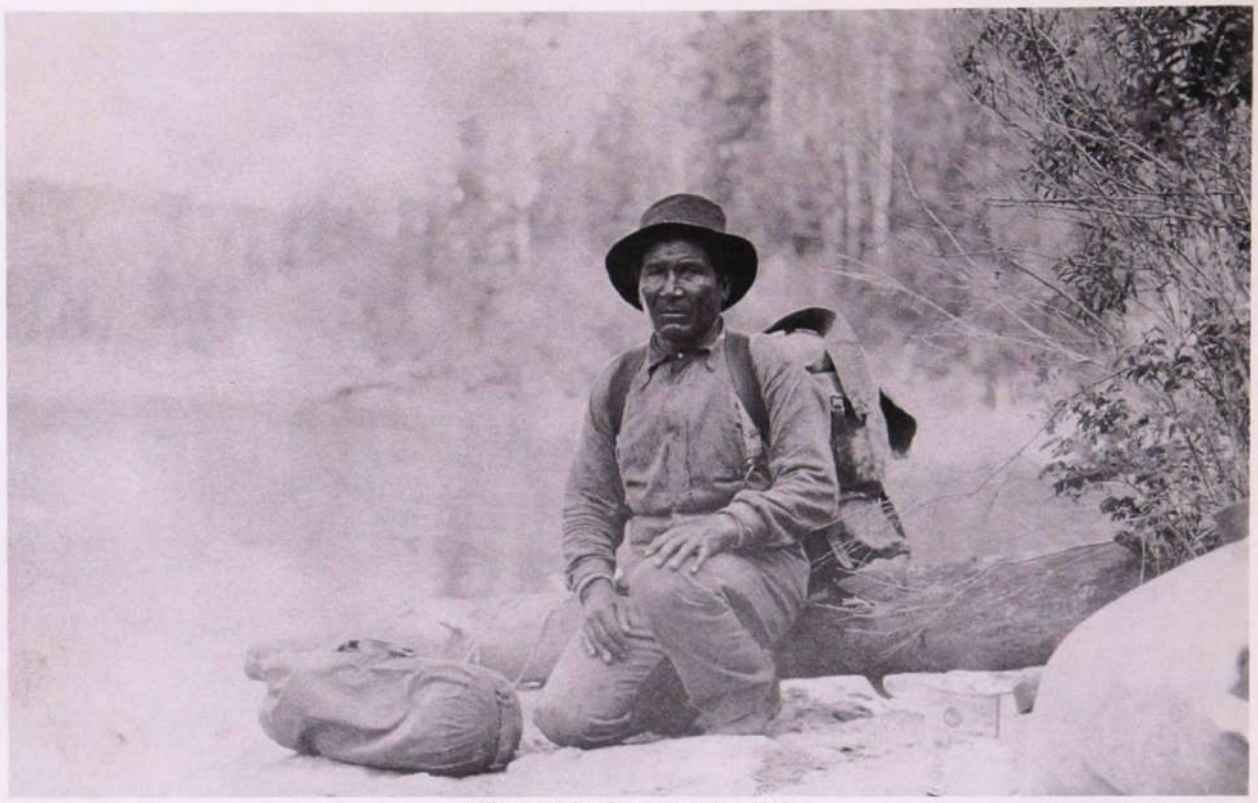
Yet few forms of travel were as steadily perilous and demanding as canoeing for weeks or months on end through little-known or unknown country: the physical labour was unremitting; one had to be a master canoeman; compass-work of a high order, coupled with a sixth sense for water, terrain, and weather, was absolutely necessary; and one's strength of character was tested to almost unendurable limits. This was so particularly on two-man or four-man trips. Such undertakings were uncommon. Most exploratory journeys by canoe were made by large parties, with the leader himself — or the white men themselves — doing little or no paddling or packing. Guides almost invariably accompanied such expeditions, whether large or small, this of course being the practice the world over:

Billy Magee runs the rapids on the northern Thlewiaza.

Colson, for example, crossed the Simpson with an aborigine, and Thesiger travelled with bedouin. It says much for Blanchet's abilities that his journeys of 1925 and 1926 were accomplished without guides. But "hard travellers" of his stamp were rare among professional surveyor-explorers and were more often to be found in the ranks of amateur adventurers, the most able, venturesome, and toughest of whom were probably David Hanbury and Warburton Pike, both Englishmen.

This account has to do with one such amateur, a successor to Hanbury and Pike, an American who, in the summer and fall of 1912, carried out one of the most commendable canoe voyages in history. His name was Ernest C. Oberholtzer. His journey to Nueltin Lake, NWT and Hudson Bay has gone all but unrecorded to the present day, for Oberholtzer, a modest man, never published a word about it. Blurred knowledge of his achievement lingered among a handful of trappers and prospectors who eventually followed him into that country. When the traveller P.G. Downes flew out from Nueltin in 1939, he met several old-timers at Churchill, among whom was Cecil "Husky" Harris: "Harris tells me," Downes wrote in his diary, "that Oberhauser, or Obenhauser, made his trip through in 1911." Before the year was out, Downes was corresponding with Oberholtzer, whom he later met; in his book *Sleeping Island* (1943), he praised his predecessor's feat. Sketches of the 1912 voyage later appeared in Calvin Rustrum's *North American Canoe Country* (1964) and R. Newell Searle's *Saving Quetico-Superior: A Land Set Apart* (1977), but these tributes appear to have gone unnoticed by historians of northern exploration.

In order to understand why Oberholtzer undertook such a challenge, it is necessary to know something of his early years. Born in Davenport, Iowa in 1884, he evinced as a boy a yearning for the north woods. But the possibility of his ever paddling to loon-music or sweating under a tumpline seemed to be extinguished when, at 17, he was stricken with rheumatic fever. As he slowly recovered, he was warned by his doctors to never indulge, for the rest of what could only be a short life, in any activity that might strain his heart. These alarms, however, were no match for Oberholtzer's spirit. Upon completing post-baccalaureate studies in landscape architecture at Harvard in 1908, he spent that summer, as he would the next, along the then still largely pristine Minnesota-Ontario border, traversing, with Indians and halfbreeds, "all the main canoe routes



Billy Magee breaking camp, circa 1912.

in the Rainy Lake watershed." One of his companions was Pat Cyr, a brother-in-law to Louis Riel and a lively storyteller. "But above all," Oberholtzer reminisced years later, "I met Billy Magee . . . the most wonderful Ojibway or any Indian I have ever known." Billy's tribal name was Titapeshwewitan, "Far-distant-echo." The two men canoed prodigious distances, deep into what was then the Quetico Provincial Forest Reserve, "And I saw that Billy was extremely intelligent, well-informed, industrious, and willing to do almost anything to please." The rigorous satisfactions of canoe travel itself, the waterfalls, head-waters, and wildlife, "the largest pine I've ever seen . . . miles and miles and miles of it," and the companionship of Magee, in whose Ojibwa lore he became fascinated, settled the course of Oberholtzer's life: "having . . . found this as wonderful if not more so than I had ever dreamed, my whole interest in the far north was tremendously stimulated."

Nevertheless, the summer of 1910 found Oberholtzer accompanying a college classmate to Europe and England. While a student, he had worked briefly as a newspaperman, and also had spent one vacation composing a publicity pamphlet on canoe routes tributary to the Canadian Northern Railway. The benefactor who had given him that job, Arthur Hawkes, an Englishman, now encouraged him to stay on in England to write and lecture on the Indians and the wildlife of the southern Shield. Oberholtzer did so. On one occasion, in a packed St. George's Hall, Liverpool, serving as a last-minute substitute for the celebrated Central Asia explorer Sven Hedin, he recounted tales told him by Billy, illustrating his talk with lantern-slides of moose and the boundary waters canoe country. During that winter in London he frequented the British Museum Library, looking up everything he could find about far northern exploration, and "came across the works of J.B. Tyrrell, who was by all odds the greatest of all modern geographers." There and then, Oberholtzer decided to follow Tyrrell's 1894 route across the Barrens: "The two things . . . that meant more to me than anything else were seeing all those caribou and seeing these Eskimos [the Caribou Eskimos] that nobody had ever known. And my imagination was at work. I thought, well, there are probably other groups of those Eskimos up in there. What that would mean, what a delight to be the first one ever to find them!" Visions of musk-oxen also excited him, and, as he recalled in the 1963 interview from which the foregoing quotations are drawn, "I wanted to go up in there." He had to wait for one more year; short of money, he accepted an offer to serve as American Vice-

Consul in Hanover, Germany during 1911. Then he translated his dreams into action.

During the winter of 1911-12, Oberholtzer wrote to the postmaster at Mine Centre, Ontario, where Titapeshwewitan sold his furs, "and told him what I had in mind and asked him whether Billy would be willing to go with me on this long trip. I said we would be gone six months, at least, and that we might get frozen in and have to stay all winter, and to tell Billy that it [would be] the hardest thing he had ever done in all his life, but that I wouldn't go without him. That if he would go, I would go, and that I'd like to know how he felt about it." Billy's feelings, the postmaster replied, were not in doubt: " 'Yes,' " he had said, " 'ready go end earth.' "

On 26 June, in an 18′ Chestnut Guide Special, Oberholtzer and Magee embarked from The Pas, their intention being to trace Tyrrell's 1894 Kazan route as far as Yathkyed Lake, whence he had portaged east to the Ferguson, and to then continue down the Kazan to Baker Lake and the HBC post at Chesterfield Inlet. Neither man had ever canoed north of the Rainy Lake watershed. To those who saw them off — "pessimistic predictions of the inhabitants about our trip" — they must have looked a doomed pair. Oberholtzer, 28, stood 5′4″ and weighed 137 pounds, and Billy, although strongly built and 20 pounds heavier, was 51 years old; the Ojibwa, now that he knew more about their undertaking, was already uneasy at the prospect of strange Indians, far stranger Eskimos, and the treeless regions for which they were bound.

Reaching Cumberland House on 30 June, Oberholtzer was hosted handsomely by one of the most interesting and winning HBC personalities of the period, post manager H.M.S. Cotter. The only man met en route who believed the American might succeed in his audacious venture, Cotter entrusted him with a letter to deliver to Solomon Ford at Chesterfield; months later, when Oberholtzer's mother feared that her son had gone missing in the Barrens, Cotter wrote her two reassuring letters. Here Oberholtzer tried to obtain a guide, but could not. The single most remarkable thing about the epic journey that was just beginning was that it would be accomplished unguided. Such was never Oberholtzer's plan. He had imagined that guides could be hired with little trouble. Here was early evidence to the contrary; "and I decide," he recorded, "to go as far as Pelican Narrows alone."

On Namew Lake the Rainy Lake men fell in company with a Revillon Frères freighting party. "These men," Oberholtzer observed, "have a way of paddling that is new to me. It consists of a very rhythmical, forceful stroke with a pause in between during which the paddlers frequently change sides. The top hand lets go entirely; the lower one slips to the top; and the paddle is swung deftly across the gunwales." He was not the first, nor would he be the last newcomer to northern Saskatchewan and Manitoba, to remark this peculiar style of paddling. Pushing on up the Sturgeon-weir beyond Amisk Lake, portaging frequently, they made Mirond Lake on 11 July: "Just as we are camping for the night several canoes appear. One of them contains an elderly man, Mr. [James Grant] Christie, manager at Pelican Narrows, an intelligent-looking squaw, two well-dressed halfbreed canoemen, and a young man named [Gordon] Hall. He said his brother [Herbert], who was passing in the canoe with a sail out in the middle of the lake, was just returning from a stay of four years at Ennadai Lake [on the Kazan River, where he had established an HBC outpost in 1906 to trade with the Caribou Eskimos] and that he would take the steamer at the end of July for Chesterfield Inlet, his new posting. [In fact, that winter Hall travelled to Chesterfield from Winnipeg by dog-team.] It had taken [Herbert] 26 days to come down as far as Pelican Narrows; the route was bad, and there were no men to be had. When this young man had done all he could to dissuade me from attempting the trip to Chesterfield, he paddled on.

"The next moment we heard a loud, ominous swish repeated at regular intervals; and there, rapidly approaching, appeared a York boat. It was full of half-breeds. They landed in the bay beyond our canoe; one man jumped over the prow; two oars were tied together as a gangway; and down came the whole crew — some

Ernest Oberholtzer, circa 1918.

twenty men and a squaw with two children. All the men filed past us to shake hands and then stood about examining our fire, our food, and our tent. Then they went over into the bushes, lighted a fire, and began gambling with cards and matches. One old fellow, who Billy thought was a Sioux and who told a funny story about squaws, was squatted in front of the fire with a bent pan in his lap and kept beating it in two-four rhythm and wailing a queer, wild, monotonous dance. When I went over to see him, he was wrapped in a blanket, his head bobbing time and his face drawn with lines of pleasure that stood out black in the firelight. Billy says this song is called 'The Squaw-tent'. Ten of the other men were sitting close together with their cards and matches spread out on a white, black-edged H.B. blanket drawn taut across their knees." A few lines further on in this powerfully evocative sketch of a way of life that seemed timeless but was soon to vanish, Oberholtzer pictured "The cook, who . . . had three large pots sitting on a huge fire. He was putting away the food in a big box and washing the bent cups and dishes. He had told me that the men had had a fine dance at the Narrows the day before. . . . One man sat in the stern of the boat strumming a fiddle. Only a few of these people spoke any English. The last thing I heard was a low sort of chanting like a prayer."

In the morning, Oberholtzer was awakened "by a voice shouting 'Wee-chow' — 'Get up!' When I came out, I found the York boatmen straggling down to the boat with their personal packs, usually in flour sacks. Some were washing their faces. The cook hastily distributed tea and the bannocks which he had been cooking all night, and then carried his whole kitchen pantry off in a box to the boat. The squaw took her seat in the stern; the steersman manned his oar; two men shoved off with poles; a third on shore put his shoulder to the prow and crawled aboard just as the boat moved off (like a Greek argosy). A man at each oar and one over, for this boat had two crews returning to Cumberland House. The usual crew consists of eight oarsmen (sometimes nine, four on one side, five on the other), a steersman, a bowman, a guide, and lately (to save waste) a cook. As the boat moved out upon the calm lake, her great oars washing like the slow beat of a funeral drum, she was magnificent. We heard the rub of her oars for half an hour afterwards."

Later that morning the travellers arrived in Pelican Narrows, where the manager, clearly trying to direct this small stranger and his Ojibwa partner to a somewhat safer destination, "kindly suggested a trip down the Seal River." At the HBC post Oberholtzer found two York boats being readied for a trip to Amisk Lake

Revillon Frères freighting party on the Sturgeon-Weir.

A York boat sets off "like a Greek argosy".

and was told that some of the best workers "were boys of eighteen. All of them were in the store buying [large, brightly coloured] handkerchiefs" — which would remain a fashionable item of apparel until the late 1930s — "mouth harps, candies, and other delicacies. They seemed a very high spirited lot; and [Louis] Thwaites [the HBC clerk] said they were the best boatmen in the north." While Thwaites in his free moments did his best to make a pair of leeboards for him, Oberholtzer negotiated for a Cree guide through Father Nicholas Guilloux, who, although appearing "worn and hollow-chested," was to serve the Oblate of Mary Immaculate at Pelican until the 1950s. But the Cree in question both drove a hard bargain and was indecisive, causing Oberholtzer to decide "to go alone in spite of everybody's warnings."

By 19 July Oberholtzer and Magee had canoed up the "wonderfully clear green water" of the Reindeer River and begun the 170-mile haul toward the northern end of Reindeer Lake. They got lost in blind bays more than once, ran into some stiff weather, and could not put their sail to much use, but, fortified by Billy's balsam tea and by a growing confidence in their fitness and ability, they made good time. On the afternoon of 27 July, some 500 miles out from The Pas, they "could discern four or five gleaming white patches on a hillside across the lake. . . . We found an Indian encampment — the best one I have ever seen. One of the men — apparently the leader — could answer a few words in English. They were all glad to have their pictures taken. Long fish that looked like herring [tullibee] hung from a pole to dry.

Half a dozen new paddles, their blades painted red, were also drying against a screen of boughs behind which the old man of the village was sunning himself. The bark canoes — those on the beach and the unfinished one above — were narrower, flatter, and at the ends straighter and sharper than any I had seen before. A new canoe is always brown; they turn white with age. I tried to talk Cree from my book. The Indian leader, whose name turned out to be El Laurent, took me to the top of the hill to show me the fort, and, when I was ready to go, he got in his canoe and took us all the way across."

Lac du Brochet, as it was then misleadingly called, was an HBC post and Oblate mission remote from

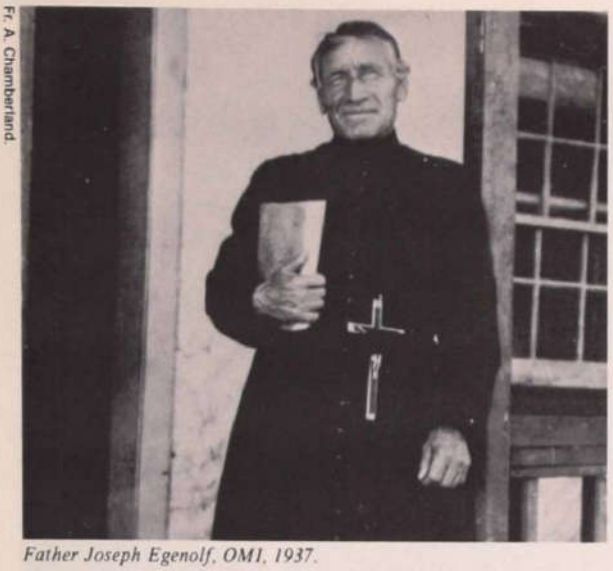
Alphonse Chipewyan and family.

major trade routes and a place seldom visited by outsiders. Founded by the Company either in 1859 or 1861 — the evidence is uncertain — it had been important during preceding decades not as a fur post but as a meat post. The Chipewyans who traded there, the Barren Land and Hatchet Lake bands whose existence centred on the caribou, had been employed in drying the meat they slaughtered and making pemmican, which was freighted south and west to supply other posts and to fuel the crews of the York boat brigades. That heyday was past, and for the next thirty-five years Brochet, drowsing in its isolation, would remain one of the least changed posts in all the North. But Oberholtzer was glad to have reached it, for this settlement was the last he could hope to see for many weeks to come and offered his final chance to obtain a guide.

At first sight, "Du Brochet, with its picketed cemetery and church and numerous clay-covered houses on the south side of a sand ridge, looked a considerable village. On closer inspection, however, most of the buildings, especially the HBC store, which had a pair of caribou antlers on the gable [and a thatched roof, which was to last until 1929], proved pretty dilapidated. I gave Laurent half a dollar and some tobacco and went where he pointed out the Company's dwelling house. Allan Nunn, the assistant factor [clerk], introduced me to Andrew Flett, a halfbreed, and a redhead named Roland, with whom he was playing pool. They listened in astonishment to my plans. Then all of them, together with the Indian named Alphonse Chipewyan, and several others, carried my outfit up into the kitchen. Alphonse was the man that had taken Father [Arsène] Turquetil down to Churchill by dog team and returned in his canoe up the Little Seal [in 1911]. He looked a good man." Oberholtzer soon met Father Joseph Egenolf, who was to become a legendary northern figure. A first-rate Chipewyan linguist, an able traveller, and a stern, unyielding shepherd to his Indians, this German-born Oblate had been sent to Brochet in 1905; he was never to leave, and died there in 1957.

Oberholtzer has left us a rare vignette of a far northern Catholic service, which he attended the following morning:

> Father Egenolf brought me a special chair and a prayer table to kneel on and I sat at the back of the church, where I could see all the Indians at worship. The women and children sat on benches or on the floor to the left. The men in their wrinkled clothes and with their heads of black straight hair bowed sat to the right. Now and then a child crossed over to its father or a worried mother left the church



Fr. A. Chamberland.

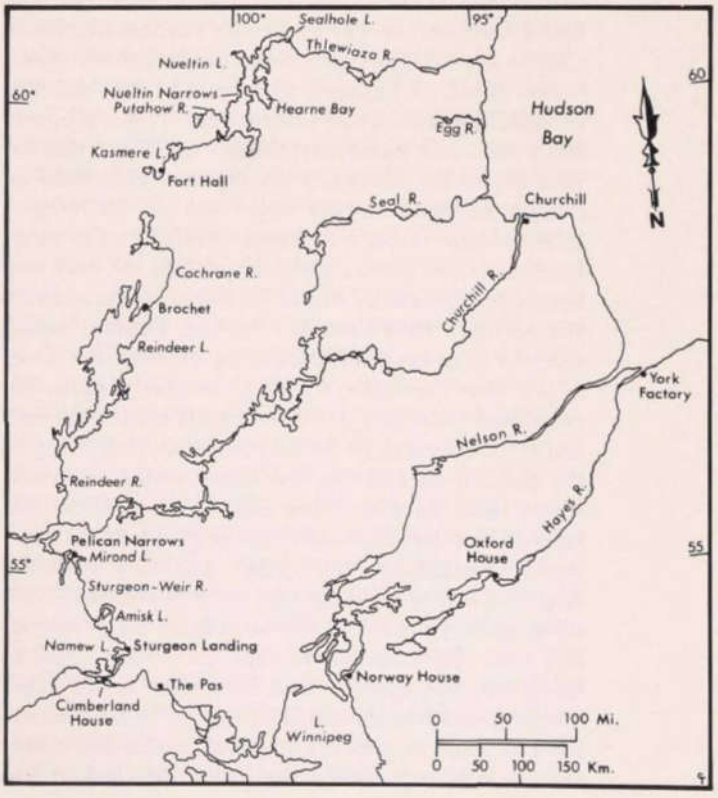
Father Joseph Egenolf, OMI, 1937.

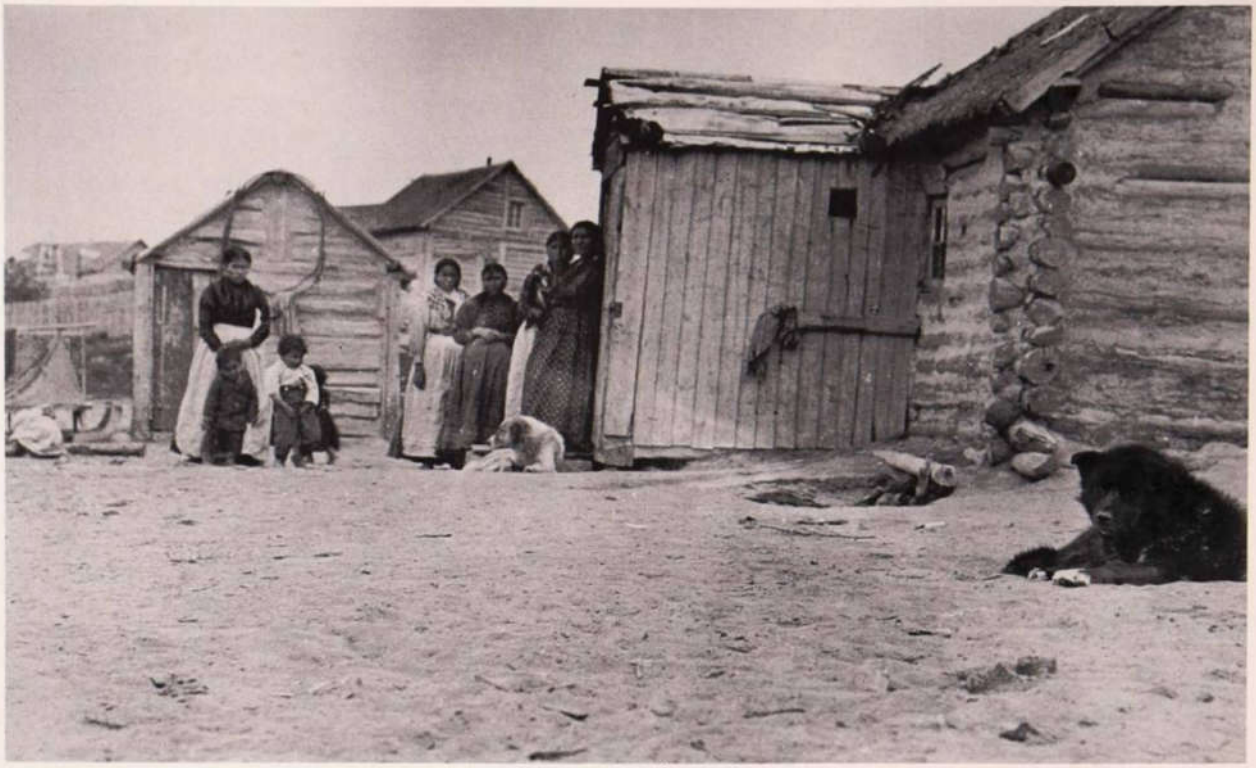
"I made up my mind that I would start north with Billy . . . Billy said he thought we could find our way . . ."

with her squawking papoose. Once there was an audible sound of nursing. Nearly all the women seemed to have colds and some kept spitting. One very wrinkled old woman on the floor was stroking the head of a very fat, bashful, babyish boy that lay in her lap. Several of the children were clean and pretty; the worst two were daughters of one mother, fat, dull, troublesome and filthy dirty. The women all wore shawls on their heads, black, striped-red, and gray; several wore dresses with neat tucks of green or blue round the skirts. When all the people had come in and crossed themselves with holy water from the conker shell at the door, the service began. Two altar boys, tinkling of bells, censers. An intermittent wheezing turned out to be an organ, with Alphonse presiding. The voiceless voices of the squaws. Service books in syllabic Chipewyan and illustrated. The thud of the flat moccasined feet when the Indians were leaving after they had taken communion. The rude equipment and decorations of the church. Stations of the cross, bunting, paper stained-glass, crucifix.

While here, Oberholtzer added to his photographic record of the trip. His camera, a large, heavy 3A Graphlex, was a far cry from today's models: "In the evening, Nunn and Billy paddled the canoe while I washed my films according to Nunn's idea by hanging them over the side." Nunn showed them the nearby mouth of the Cochrane River, their trail toward unknown country, and that night, their last under a roof for a long time to come, "Andrew told some good stories about wolves and deer," animals the canoemen would soon be seeing in abundance.

The next day's entry reveals how uncertain Ober-





Street scene, Brochet, 1912.

holtzer was as to his route and destination but also how determined he was to take his chances. Alphonse Chipewyan could not go — his wife put her foot down — nor could El Laurent, who "said he was not well enough." And so, wrote Oberholtzer, "I made up my mind that . . . I would start north with Billy either for Ennadai or for Churchill via Nueltin. Billy said he thought we could find our way. I was [of] half a mind to go straight through to Chesterfield. At noon I met Laurent at the priest's and learned that the only way I could go east was by way of Nueltin, using preferably the northern river course." By this, Laurent would seem to have been differentiating between the Thlewiaza and the more complex, southerly route via Nejanilini Lake and the Wolverine River to the main course of the Seal; or he may have been referring to the Seal in its entirety, the upper waters of which would likely have been low and which could only be reached by extremely tough portaging. "I made a copy," noted Oberholtzer, "of Father Egenolf's [actually Alphonse's very rudimentary] map of the Seal, took down some Chipewyan phrases out of his grammar, and paid him $2.00 for the church." Nunn, who, to his credit, had insisted that Billy sleep in the HBC dwelling with himself and Oberholtzer, "had afternoon tea and made us presents of gloves, moccasins, a deer skin, a skin bag, some dried meat that looked like leather, and a *pie*. He also helped carry down our outfit. I said goodbye to the priest. . . . and then at nearly six o'clock on a beautiful clear evening, Billy and I set out for the river."

Before following Oberholtzer up the Cochrane and into *terra incognita*, a further, clarifying, explanation of his audacity is in order. That nearly everyone he met thought him mad to persist with his plan — such as it was — is hardly surprising. The territory reaching north from the 59th parallel to the Kazan was almost entirely unexplored, was unpredictable in its weather and in the whereabouts of its only major game, the caribou, was but thinly inhabited by nomadic natives, and, with its rapids, windswept river expansions and lakes, and inevitable portages, presented a constant menace to two men travelling alone. A mere handful of white men had preceded Oberholtzer. The first of these explorers was of course Samuel Hearne, who was not followed until more than a century later by Tyrrell. Though no explorer, Fr. Gasté, OMI, had stolen a march on Tyrrell by travelling overland from Brochet to Ennadai in quest of Ahiarmiut souls in 1868. In 1896, Joseph Lofthouse, the Anglican missionary at Fort Churchill, had canoed with two Indians from Hudson Bay up the Tha-anne River as far as South Henik Lake, where ice forced him to turn back. We have caught a glimpse of the next such figure, Herbert

Hall, on his way south from Ennadai Lake. And in 1908 J.P. Ault and C.C. Stewart of the Carnegie Institute of Washington's Land Magnetic Observations survey, guided by Indians from Brochet, had followed in Hall's path as far north as what was known as "Canoe Limit" on Putahow Lake, the spot at which canoe freight bound for Ennadai was unloaded and stored to await the winter dog teams.

Of Nueltin Lake, almost nothing was known. In 1912 the likenesses of *Nu-thel-tin-tu-eh*, or Sleeping Island Lake, that appeared on maps were based solely on Hearne's experience, native reports, and conjecture. Hearne had crossed it in the winter of 1770-71, but his representations of "Island Lake" in both his MS map of 1772 and his published map of 1795 owed next to nothing to actual observation or surveying. Tyrrell, who had journeyed far to the west of it, showed it on his 1896 map as a crude shape in dotted lines. What Oberholtzer had been able to learn about the lake and routes to and from it derived simply from what the Caribou-Eaters and the Caribou Eskimos had passed on in the course of trading at Brochet and Ennadai. Distant, immense, and mysterious, it would, if he succeeded in finding it and its northern outlet, provide him with an opportunity to reach Hudson Bay in time to get south before being marooned, and almost surely killed, by winter weather. As he headed up the Cochrane, however, he still entertained the slim hope of going all the way to Chesterfield Inlet, where, even if marooned, he and Billy could somehow pass the winter at the HBC post.

The route from the mouth of the Cochrane to Kasmere Lake has become well known to aficionados of northern travel in late years, and so can be dealt with sparingly. Caribou were met with in plenty, as were signs of their slaughter: "Caribou bones everywhere from Reindeer Lake up." August 7th found the companions sailing down the upper section of Tyrrell's Thanout Lake. On the eastern heights above the first narrows, "At the top-most point, some Indian has built a new conical lookout of spruce trees, from which he can see the surrounding country for miles." The Indian, then in his prime, was Casmir (variously spelled Kasmir, Kasimir, and Kasmere), who for five decades was the dominating personality and sometime chief of the Barren Land Band. Telling descriptions of him were to appear in Thierry Mallet's *Glimpses of the Barren Grounds* (1930) and Downes's book; in 1940 he would be buried on this commanding site, where the wooden cross that marks his grave still stands. The partners kept going, "until at last on the west shore near the end, we saw the several well built log-hewn houses of the Red Head family." There here occurs what at first appears to be an unaccountable omission in the journal, for Oberholtzer says nothing about seeing Fort Hall. According to the Company's records, this outpost was built in 1910 by Herbert, who, it is thought, named it for his father, R.H. Hall, who had been appointed Fur Trade Commissioner that year. Yet when Ault went through in '08 he spent three days taking observations at the "new loghouse residence . . . known as Husky Post or Fort Hall." How to make sense of this confusion? Oberholtzer was following Tyrrell's 1896 map, on which the Red Head place is shown, and had with him Tyrrell's report, in which he would have read that "A mile above the north end of the lake [on the NW shore], Red Head, the chief of the band of Chippewyan Indians trading at Reindeer Lake, has a comfortable little house where he spends the winter." The answer would seem to be that Oberholtzer somehow failed to hear of the existence of Fort Hall, which the indefatigable Herbert must have established in 1907 or 1908 on the Red Head site, presumably following the latter's death. In the event, Oberholtzer did not stop, and saw only "a nondescript bushy dog with a cheerful curl in his tail" who followed them along the shore for a distance toward the portage that leads to Kasmere, or Theitaga, Lake.

The next day, 8 August, Oberholtzer made up his mind: "Having to decide whether to go on to Ennadai [by way of Tyrrell's route up the Little Partridge River to Kasba Lake and the Kazan] or to turn east to the Thlewiaza, I told Billy to shave while I looked at my maps . . . At ten o'clock we started off with the intention of going to Churchill." Late that afternoon, at the northeast end of the lake where the Thlewiaza River begins in earnest, [It flows into the southwestern end of Nueltin, then is reincarnated at the lake's northeastern extremity and runs some 200 miles to Hudson Bay.] they came upon a Chipewyan encampment, consisting "entirely of squaws and children," one of the latter of whom, like the women, "indicated his inability to understand by exclaiming and putting his fingers in his ears. I first shook hands with two dirty old squaws, the older of whom had filth caked on her naked breasts." Having photographed them and given them a bit of tobacco, Oberholtzer was presented with a can of deer fat and a red handkerchief full of powdered deer meat; then he traded "a young squaw with a suckling" four plugs of tobacco for a pair of moccasins. "In trying to make them understand what I wanted to buy, I so much excited the generosity of one squaw that she took the moccasins off her feet and handed them to me. Everywhere meat was hanging to dry and a number of fat skin bags were in the lake soaking for the tanning and others stretched tight on the ground had been rubbed with caribou brains, which looked like brown moss or clay. Billy says [that] after the preliminary rubbing, the skins are smoked for three or four days, then soaked again and thoroughly washed, then squeezed out by means of two sticks and a tourniquet, and finally stretched and pulled over a fire. . . .

Old women of the Barren Land band.

The dogs, as usual, were having fights and being belaboured by the squaws. One squaw with a hideous twisted face and exposed teeth charged upon me with a stick as if to break the camera, but as everyone laughed, I did not move. Perhaps she was only claiming to be a witch, which she fully looked." Near this spot, twenty-seven years later, Downes was to find only a "frightfully depressing and pitiful" graveyard.

Pushing on in the twilight, Oberholtzer and Billy found the river banks thick with dead caribou. "We counted 25 in the first 15 minutes of paddling and from there on saw them all the way down . . . sometimes whole, sometimes only the blue decaying meat, nearly always the white antlers. While we were getting supper an Indian named Null-get Josay, who was camped [close by] came over in his bark canoe to see us. He had one of the long, shallow-kyack-like canoes used for deer hunting with a skin in the middle for a seat, a long bloody-headed spear, and a single and a double [bladed] paddle. We gave him some supper, matches, and a smoke, for which he seemed grateful. He could not understand Cree but knew some Eskimo words for which he gave me the equivalents in Chipewyan." Here, as throughout, one would give a good deal to know Billy's thoughts and feelings. Early the next morning the travellers were treated generously at Null-get's camp, being given moccasins and "a pair of bloody skin gloves." Then receiving half-understood directions for the course to Nueltin, they moved on, and soon left the route to Putahow, the last known to white men, behind. They were not to see another human being for thirty-four days.

Oberholtzer now commenced time-and-compass mapping of this southerly section of the Thlewiaza. Nowadays, this river can be run in three days by skilled canoemen armed with maps. Oberholtzer, navigating uncertainly, particularly on the expansions, had also to stop regularly to draw and to write down his calculations. Running rapids, lining the loaded canoe down them, sometimes wading it, portaging when necessary, they journeyed in cooling temperatures and occasional rain through a boreal, esker-crossed landscape that moved Oberholtzer to admiration. The fishing was good, and from time to time they enjoyed more close sightings of caribou and wolves. Billy's skill was noted more than once, as when Oberholtzer, believing the Ojibwa to be carrying the canoe behind him over a portage of slippery, unsteady boulders, suddenly "beheld Billy crouched in the middle of the canoe swinging his paddle from side to side and bobbing up and down on the flood of the rapid. He made a sudden turn and came in quietly to the eddy, great beads of sweat on his forehead." With Graves, Sucker, Sandy, Downes, Tuninili, and Nahili lakes of our present-day maps at their backs, and having spent one day under canvas during a northeasterly gale, they unknowingly reached the river's mouth on the evening of the 14th. In the morning they climbed the esker above their campsite. "The top of the sand bluff is almost as level as a floor and commands a fine view of the river on the south and of a star-shaped little lake and miles of wooded sand vales to the north and west. In some places the sand is whorled into lovely little round hillocks topped with berry bushes. The whole landscape is wavy with ridges and valleys of sand more or less open and park-like and gradually descending to the deep-moss marshes round the little lake. On the sandy slopes there are many fine white spruce and some smaller white birch, and I saw one jackpine; farther down, black spruce predominate." In days to come,

this remembered panorama would seem an almost edenic vision.

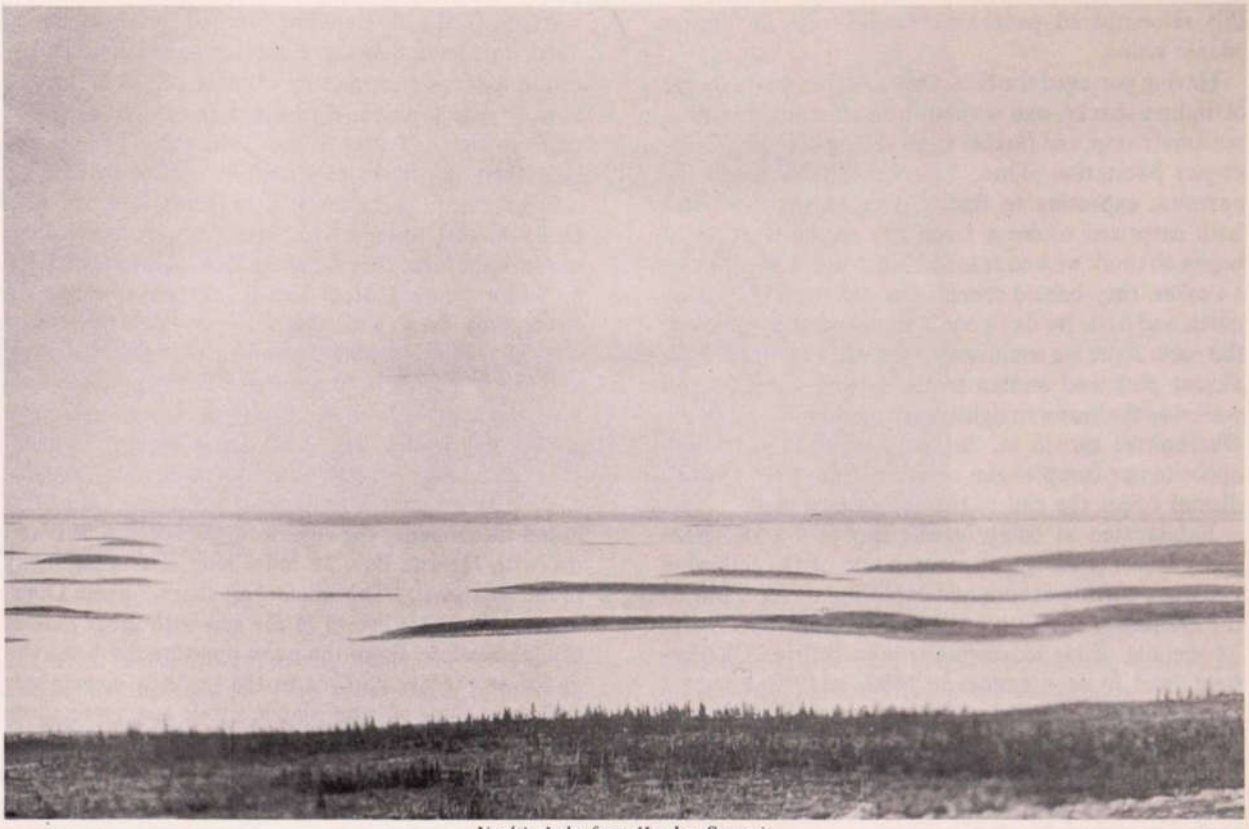
Having portaged the falls, they soon passed "a couple of Indian shacks, one with an iron chimney," another seasonal camp, and further signs of long-standing Chipewyan habitation. Then, "As we came through the narrows, expecting to find a river beyond, we were both surprised to see a large bay to the west. . . . I began to think we had reached Nutheltin Lake." From an esker, they beheld sheets of water stretching away north and east. By day's end, "in the northeast beyond the main shore we could see several bare rounded peaks almost pink and molten in the setting sun." A wolf wailed as the northern lights rose and shimmered. When Oberholtzer turned in, "a pack of wolves in the bay opposite our camp began anwswering in four distinct, dismal voices the call of the one distant wolf."

Exhilarated at being on the rim of a transitional zone, Oberholtzer spent many hours of the following two days putting ashore and exploring on foot. But on the evening of the 17th he reread Tyrrell's report, with its account of his harrowing trip south from Chesterfield Inlet in open canoes in 1893, and "was sorry I had not travelled all day. I began to realise what an expense it would mean to me to arrive at Churchill much after September 1st, and [prepared] for a very early start in the morning." A trying passage lay before the adventurers. Nueltin's shoreline is indented with deep arms, tortuous inlets, and hundreds of blind bays; its surface, in places a maze of islands as far as the eye can see, elsewhere presents a canoeman with windswept traverses on which land may drop from sight. The eastern shore is especially convoluted, and it was along it that Oberholtzer chose to travel, seeking as he was the northeasterly end of the 120-mile long lake and the outlet of the Thlewiaza.

As, by trial and error, they worked their way northward, the terrain became increasingly stark. Billy's paddling weakened, and he exhibited signs of depression. They sailed when they could. It was a fine caribou year — they saw deer almost constantly — but they kept their .22 in its case and continued to feed on oatmeal, hardtack, bannock, pork, pemmican, and fish. On 19 August, at the narrows where the Putahow empties into the lake, they found numerous tepee poles but no Chipewyans. One of those early days brought a strong west wind and with it "a smoky haze, which soon blurred everything beyond half a mile. . . . travelling in the smoke, we might have been approaching a Pittsburgh or an Edinburgh, so like steeples or smoke stacks did the few indistinct trees appear." Violent thunderstorms followed, and were succeeded by windier weather and dropping temperatures. The 21st found them facing the vast northern reaches of Nueltin, with Hearne Bay, 36 miles long, extending away to the southeast. "The whole west shore," wrote Oberholtzer, "appears brown in the sun with great masses of blue shadow. From the point opposite the headland as far as the eye can see to the north is open water with only a line of little islands a mile apart stretching into the blue distance." Here, at Nueltin Narrows, they climbed "a very high, conspicuous ridge . . . and were well repaid. The contour for miles around looked like a great relief map. . . . The islands everywhere resemble the lake in shape, narrow necks connecting larger bodies, sort of figure eights. Magnificent view. . . . At sunset, [in a cairn] at the very top I left a can, in which was a page out of my [survey] book. It gave the date and [the] condition of our supplies and said that we had named the hill 'Hawkes Summit' in honour of Mr. Arthur Hawkes."

To recount the next week in detail would be to write

"A young squaw with a suckling."



Nueltin Lake from Hawkes Summit.

repetitively of the grinding monotony of paddling against headwinds, of the tension of canoeing in heavy seas, of the frustration of following false leads, and of soaking discomfort ashore. Winds out of the north, mists, and the bewildering raggedness of the shoreline made both navigation and reconnaissance mapping difficult in the extreme. By now the ground cover had changed into "great patches of crimson and carmine," and clumps of stunted spruce and tamaracks appeared only in hollows and streambeds. Campsites were bleak, wet, and wind-whipped, and Oberholtzer took to his heavy underwear.

The two men are easily enough pictured beside their gust-torn fire, under that enormous sky, with darkness closing in. No doubt the canoe is serving as a windbreak; behind it, Billy, crouching on his heels, tends the bannock baking in the fry-pan while Oberholtzer, sitting cross-legged, writes up his notes. They ache. Their eyes are smarting from the smoke; their hands are scarred and calloused, their fingernails cracked and black, their hair foul and tangled. Oberholtzer's face is dark from sun, wind, and the water's glare. Their wool and flannel clothing, reeking of woodsmoke and holed by cinders, is torn, patched, filthy, and damp; the fronts of their heavy canvas pants are stiff and slick with soot and grease where they have rubbed and wiped their hands while cooking and eating. Oberholtzer, driven by ambition, curiosity, and the logical imperatives of mapping, has of late become increasingly ruthless in his determination to reach salt water; as he writes, he calculates, his features stern in the jumping firelight. Billy turns the bannock absently, for his innermost being is far distant, has been drawn home — to the sweet scent of white and red pine; to the vision of a moose raising its great, dripping, sun-spangled head from a feed of lily roots; to the rhythms, and the tongue, of his own country.

Not until 27 August, running east some fifteen miles below the 61st parallel, did they leave Nueltin's waters and enter Sealhole Lake. The next afternoon they heard at their backs what they thought to be a huge fish breaking the surface; turning — Billy in the stern, Oberholtzer in the bow — they saw "a black head, which kept following us about. It was a seal. I had work to persuade Billy not to shoot him.' [As far as can be determined, Oberholtzer was the first to sight a Harbour Seal (*Phoca vitulina*) so far inland. J.K. Doutt would not locate his specimens in Lower Seal Lake, Ungava until 1938.] At last, the current-bent watergrass showing the way, they came to the head of

Billy portaging in rough terrain.

a rapids, the outlet of the Thlewiaza. "Here," Oberholtzer wrote that night, "we had our first real mishap." Presumably because of exhaustion, or carelessness brought on by elation, they misjudged the channel; the canoe stuck, tilted, and quickly filled: "The water flooded in over the packs, even while I was hurling them ashore; and the good things that were being lost in each one flashed across my mind — all my pictures, my camera, the notebooks, the cask of tea, the hardtack. . . ." As it happened, they lost only one spoon and the rifle; groping for the .22 underwater proved futile, for Oberholtzer was "whirled ten yards downstream." The canoe came through unscathed. The next morning's sun and wind having partly dried their clothing and gear, they started the long descent to Hudson Bay.

Physically, as well as mentally, this was the most gruelling part of the journey. The all but treeless country was the epitome of desolation, and they were beset almost continually by raw drizzle or wind-driven mist and rain. Both men suffered considerably from the cold. They had often to forage as far as a mile to collect firewood. At daybreak, rising stiffly to their feet from beneath the shelter of the canoe, they saw ice on the pools and bogs around them. An hour or two later, their faces, necks, and wrists were bleeding anew from blackfly bites. Portages were frequent, for the Thlewiaza, except at its few expansions, is a swift, rapids-choked river. These carries, across boulder-fields and over muskeg, were at their worst in winds, when the man shouldering the double-ribbed 18′ Chestnut, which by now would have weighed over 100 pounds, had all he could do to reach water again. In his journal, Oberholtzer tended to understate this brutal labour: "Hard work. Wind made carrying the canoe difficult and running rapids hazardous." A less laconic entry is that of 5 September, wherein he noted that "bad weather" was imminent, that they had no idea of how far they were from Churchill, and that they were "travelling hardly more than five miles a day, and both of us rheumatic." While Billy slept beside him, he sought to curb his impatience by reading Robert Louis Stevenson's essay on 'Walking Tours'; one likes to think that he permitted himself to grin wryly at Stevenson's definition of an "over-walker" — "he is the man in the proverb, in short, who goes farther and fares worse." The next day, still windbound, Oberholtzer wrote that "The prospects for reaching home or even Churchill before winter look very dark, but I am resolved to make a desperate try."

"I saw at once that it was an Eskimo in his kyack . . ."

As they pressed on downriver, caribou, wolves, and seals kept them company. "Have seen many deer, especially large bucks. Some of the antlers very large. One very wide pair seemed to begin with sort of horizontal elbows. I noticed a large white dewlap extending lengthwise on the throat of this buck. . . . Billy said they looked like men in white shirts with their hands over their heads." Billy's gift for whimsy was matched by his mastery in taking the unloaded canoe through rapids wilder than any they had seen before.

Fifteen days from Sealhole Lake, on the afternoon of 12 September, "The river broadened to a mile or more and we soon saw with fresh hope a great opening before us." The providential experience that now occurred is best told in Oberholtzer's words:

> Soon after I had tasted the water, Billy saw two queer curling columns shifting against the gray eastern sky. If not smoke, he said, he had never seen anything like them before. Then, while we were marvelling at the phenomenon, I saw something black moving on the water and presently there was a boat coming toward us. I saw at once that it was an Eskimo in his kyack. Swinging his double paddle slowly from side to side and with two little red flannel streamers [fluttering] from each end of his boat, he came up beside us, and, extending his paddle for me to take hold of, shook hands. Then with easy strokes he led the way over to his camp . . . while I examined his kyack. It was long and had a prong at each end, and in the middle of the flat top there was a round turret . . . just like a miniature torpedo boat. Over all the yellow seal skin was drawn tight as a drum. A seal's head and entrails were lying beside the seat and on either side various poles and spears. The Eskimo said his name was Bite. . . . We landed at his camp, where he had a large boat moored in front of a canvas tepee [tupik]. A white fox skin turned inside-out was drying on the end of a pole, which projected above the tepee.

Once landed, Oberholtzer gave Bite tobacco, a knife, a pipe, tea, sugar, and other odds and ends, and the two "arranged as well as we could with our few words that he should take me to Churchill in his sail boat." That evening the Harvard man visited the Padlemuit and recorded that "he had all sorts of meat lying about and cooking on the stove. For a light he was burning two little sticks in a jar of grease. He himself was cracking seal bones with a knife and eating the marrow. His wife, her papoose on her back and her long bead rolls hanging down in front of her ears, kept her back to me. . . . All our troubles now seemed over and I thought ourselves truly blessed." Whether Oberholtzer and Magee could have reached Churchill had they not met this family is an unanswerable question. They were worn down by the exertions, and the distance from the river's mouth to Churchill by canoe is

some 120 potentially dangerous miles. On the other hand, their toughness and determination might have seen them through; as we shall see, they were shortly to paddle a still greater distance on salt water. What is certain is that their deliverance from the challenge was most welcome.

Next morning, no sooner had Bite lashed the canoe to one side of the whaleboat and the kayak to the other, and loaded everything, than "it began to rain and to blow so hard that Bite said the canoe would quickly fill with water. We decided to wait a day and immediately the transporting of all the things began again. Before he even attended to his own family, Bite made us a wigwam of his sail and carried over his stove for our warmth. This courtesy I quickly refused." Like so many white men who lived or travelled with them, Oberholtzer was taken with the buoyant dispositions and thoughtfulness of these people, whom he would praise warmly in his diary over the next several days. Now, making the most of the delay, he got better acquainted with Bite's sons: "one of the boys had a bloody bladder that he was blowing up and making a noise with; the other had caught a little half-dead snowbird, which he was slowly and lovingly killing, as a cat does a mouse. Bite went about hewing his sledge [komatic] runner and the boys played out in the cold. All the presents I had given him were handed to the children — knives, needles and all. The baby chewed the tobacco and the ten-year-old boy, with the pipe in his mouth, took on a shrewd, wizened appearance. Bite himself several times visited me to ask about money, and Billy lay at the side of the wigwam shivering in his blanket" — not, one surmises, only from the cold. "The two boys hovered round our wigwam all day, the older one telling me many Eskimo words. Late in the afternoon, when Bite shot a duck, the second boy ran out naked and snatched it out of the water. All of them were expert at throwing stones."

The days that followed, although they held some unsettling moments, were happy ones for Oberholtzer, who was to recall the generosity of these Padlemuit for the rest of his life. They embarked on the 14th, with Bite predicting a three-day spin to Fort Churchill. Three hours later they went aground on a retreating tide, and the balance of that day was spent necessarily at close quarters in the propped boat. "Bite's wife [Taheoh] baked three bannocks on the bare stove top while the big boy [Ootoopulyak] tended the bare-bottomed baby. The more violently he rocked it, the more it laughed. It had on its head a hood festooned with

Bite and Taheoh's children, one with pipe.

Bite with a seal.

black and white beads. The second boy [Ohrutyuk] carried the telescope in a red flannel bag decorated with a snake of black and white beads. Mother playing with youngest boy. She would show her teeth and pretend to cry and when he pulled open her eyes and found them smiling, both would laugh. . . . Father pouring tea into the baby's mouth and patting her fat belly to feel the tea run in. . . . Father lighting the second boy's pipe with embers from the stove. . . . High-bodied trousers and hoods give the children a dwarfish, brown appearance." These were the first of a series of intimate, palpable vignettes expressive of Oberholtzer's delighted fascination with his rescuers. But he was not delighted at twilight when, having sailed but a short distance back the way they had come, Bite moored the boat to a big rock and "Against my protests, put his necessary outfit and his whole family into the canoe and pushed off with the rough sea . . . gradually I [realised] that he intended us to remain all night in the boat. He had filled our water can and left us the stove. This savoured of a real adventure. Left alone in a storm two miles out at sea, suppose our Eskimos drowned and the boat went adrift. The boat was rolling badly and the sky looked like snow. I wondered how two men could sit in the kyack and if I could keep upright in it." Billy's reaction is not recorded.

All turned out for the best, and in the morning, "with one reef in the sail and with clear sunshine we got away on the billowy green water. . . . I sat in the stern, happily writing. Soon Ootoopulyak lifted the baby over beside him [and] busied himself kissing her and making strange noises and faces for her delight and in lighting the two pipes and helping his brother blow smoke bubbles. Taheoh, kneeling in the sunny bow, chopped wood with the immemorial axe and made a fire in the stove. Bite hummed and once took a shot at a gull that ventured near. We were shipping no water. Bite sat off the end of the boat and the children used the bailing can for all purposes. Ohrutyuk resembles his mother. Oval face with even-colored deep pink cheeks. Hair cut rather short to the temples. . . . Mischievous way of looking out of the corners of his eyes and shrewdly smirking. Always smoking and trying to climb the mast or pulling the baby's toes. Mother would growl at him and threaten to hit him but always ended by laughing. Long high trousers of yellow drilling lined with woolen . . . and hitched up with long, flapping suspenders sewed on. Sealskin shoes and blanket socks. Hooded deer-skin shirt with the hair turned in, and puffy-looking like a foot-ball suit. Outer hooded shirt of red flannel. Red cotton handkerchief round his neck. Most like a brownie. Ootoopulyak dwarfish in features and limbs. . . . Dirtiest and most ragged big brother and big sister of the family. Very affectionate to little ones. Blue jean jacket, tailor-made vest, duck shirt with long, ragged, much-patched sleeves. . . . Always scratching. Very short nose, slit eyes, low forehead, sunken profile, broad cheek bones, Japanese countenance. Quick to smile. Taheoh: variable, expressive face. Happy disposition. Low voice. Three rings on outer three fingers of left hand, two on right hand: nickel and brass. Two thin bands of bluish and white beads round left wrist. Deer-skin trousers, hair out, tucked into sealskin boots. Deer-skin shirt, hair in, with long fringed tails in front and back. Trimmed with red braid. Hair wound round two rolls fifteen inches long and an inch and a half in diameter. These rolls had a spiral decoration of black and white beads on a background of red and long strings of black and white beads hang from the tops. Shirt loose so that baby can be

hung on the back or shifted to the front to suck. . .Very affectionate and playful."

That afternoon they put ashore at a Padlemuit camp near the mouth of the Egg River, Bite's purpose being to leave his family and komatik and go on to Churchill with his brother, Ahmak, as crew. The four men set off dashingly enough early on the 16th, but the wind freshened ominously and fog began to obscure the shore. Beating back to Egg Island, as they "plunged along terrifically," Ahmak somehow boiled tea and, despite having to bail salt water out of the pan, cooked a "fresh brown" pork bannock. "Everybody was very merry" when they returned.

Oberholtzer and Billy were hosted warmly and attentively, although Billy, it is possible to sense between the lines of the journal, kept much to himself. He had, however, taken a fancy to the Inuits' seal-skin boots, and his master got him a pair."This is a laborious life," wrote Oberholtzer: "I saw an old woman go over for a big load of sticks, which she carried on her back, hobbling along with two sticks." At one point, "the two older boys came over and sat down by the canoe where I was writing. I amused them with some of my old juvenile tricks, such as high kicking, walking on my folded knees, and climbing over a stick, none of which either of them could do."

Leaving this domestic tranquility behind for good on 17 September, the four sailed south. For lunch the Eskimos ate "boiled whale, which smelled like clams, only stronger and old," and Oberholtzer, suddenly finding the boat's motion "a little trying . . . lay down on the packs."Miscalculating their position on a falling tide, they were forced to sleep aboard that night, and at Bite's urging — he claimed, perhaps disingenuously, that there was too strong a headwind to proceed — the next day was spent hunting seals, geese, ducks, and gulls a short distance up the Seal River. Oberholtzer recorded graphically the brothers' hunting-lust, including Ahmak's shooting "a barred brown hawk, that dropped to the ground with an angry shriek and hopped sidewise in desperate defiance. Ahmak was afraid to go near it, but he stoned it down to the edge of the water, where it took a stand against a boulder. Knocked over by another stone, it got up again and again, even when the Eskimo had clubbed its brains out. It died very hard and game, snatching with its sharp black talons at the stick."

September 19th was to be a long, as well as a long-awaited, day. Having reballasted the boat with boulders, they followed the coastline south, Oberholtzer jotting down his impressions of Bite — "Ambitious, energetic, alert . . . soldierly, capable expression. Strong

Waiting for the tide, the canoe strapped to Bite's boat.

Padlemiut camp, Egg River.

lines of neck show hard work" — and Ahmak: "Erect, stalwart, straight, broad-shouldered. . . . Smokes lidded pipe incessantly. Very early riser and cheerful, willing worker." By mid-afternoon the fog bank through which they were slipping was shredded by a powerful wind, and the seas got up. Billy "crouched in his blanket in the bottom of the boat," Bite excitedly and talkatively took two reefs in the sail, and Ahmak, "quieter and cooler, kept smoking his pipe." It was thoroughly dark when, "in the wildest confusion," they dropped anchor in the surf at Churchill. Landing as they did some distance from the Fort, they had to pack "across the rocks and bogs and creeks" until they saw before them "a number of lighted buildings," which proved to be the RNWMP barracks. Here Oberholtzer and Billy were given "a royal welcome" and, "sitting in the kitchen by a warm fire," spoke of their adventures until midnight. It had been six weeks and two days since they set off from Brochet.

In his monthly report to the Commissioner of the RNWMP, Superintendent François Demers explained that "On September 17th [sic], Mr. E.C. Oberholtzer, a journalist from Davenport, Iowa, U.S.A., arrived at Churchill; he came via Le Pas, Reindeer Lake, Cochrane River, and the Thlewiaza River, to Hudson Bay. He had only one Indian with him, and travelled the whole distance in a canoe." R.J.C. Handford, the HBC manager, was less impressed, his entry for the 19th exemplifying the curt, dispassionate style so typical of HBC post journals: "Mr. Oberholtzer arrived from the North at the Barracks. Bight and Ahmuck brought him along." Handford, Oberholtzer observed in turn, "explained that Eskimo wages were very low and said he did not believe in spoiling the men. . . . Thirty skins were doled out to Bite, but he was not satisfied and had to be given forty. To Ahmak I gave ten skins and to each some presents of candy and tobacco and ample provisions for the return trip." During his two-day stopover at Churchill, Oberholtzer visited the ruins of Fort Prince of Wales, was befriended by Demers and F.C. Severier, the Anglican missionary, and their wives, and replenished his outfit. He and Billy were still far from home.

On 22 September, bearing mail for both the HBC and the RNWMP, the two men embarked for York Factory. This hazard-ridden passage along the coast was to take them eleven days, four of which held them stormbound on Cape Churchill. Hail, snow, gales, great swells, and the treacherous 16-foot tides tested their fitness, navigation, and tenacity. Often they lost their bearings in fog or darkness; Billy's morale faltered, at times seriously. On the 29th they paddled for thirteen

hours without stopping, far into the night. On the 30th, with ice forming on the canoe and heavy jackets wrapped around their feet, they kept going for fourteen hours. The next morning, as they recuperated in a wretched campsite surrounded by "marsh moss and pools of stinking water," Oberholtzer confessed in his diary that "the thought of carrying the canoe out across the marsh and mud flats and of paddling another 14 hours until one o'clock in the morning is not appealing." Then, having gathered light firewood to carry in case they got the chance to boil the kettle at low tide, pulled bundles of willows to cushion their knees while paddling, baked bannock and biscuits, and dried their clothes, they went back to sleep for the rest of the day. The continuation of this entry borders on the hallucinatory:

> At eleven, when I had cooked soup and tea, I awakened Billy, who got up glum and very reluctant. In a few minutes we were wading out across the slippery marshes with the canoe. I went back for another load and then packed the canoe while Billy brought all the rest in several enormous loads. We were soon through the surf with only a few splashings, but the air on the Bay felt much chillier than ashore. We had got off just before high tide and now the wind seemed to be changing. Billy asked in a bewildered sort of way how the compass pointed. We could see the dim, low line of shore, the clear, waning half-moon, and myriads of stars. Billy pointed out the lyre-like constellation in the south [Lyra], which he called 'Ah-toh-ah-moh.' . . . I kept wondering how far daybreak was off still but restrained myself from looking at my watch. The grayness of the sea and heavens sent a strange gloomy ache through the body and made me recall all the things I heard about the malign influence of the moon. I seemed to be moving in a nightmare. The waves of the headwind bobbed up and down under the canoe and I hardly knew I was paddling. I counted incessantly and watched the stars. At last I looked at my watch, which said two o'clock.

As dawn broke, Oberholtzer, leaning over the gunwale, tasted fresh water; they had reached the mouth of the Nelson. "Then, as we got into shallower water, we turned northeast toward a large beacon that had been dimly visible for a long time. The shores no longer looked like islands. . . . We tasted some bannock but I, at least, was too tired to eat. The sea had become perfectly calm, but the sun had a ring round it. . . . I look at my maps several times and concluded that York must still be 20 miles away. The beacon — a huge one — seemed to be on a swampy island. All round were sand flats, on which I thought I saw men walking. I heard voices, too, and shots, or imagined I did. . . . On and on we paddled in the rising tide till it seemed to me that the low shore was swimming away from us. Billy was heading for land and I did not care. I only wanted to lie down. We paddled along the edge of the marsh till we came to a creek [the Machichi]. This we ascended a short way till we found a level sand and clay island, high above the full tide. I went to bed under the canoe as soon as we landed, which was at noon." While Oberholtzer slept, Billy came across a young Cree, who agreed to stay the night with them before guiding them to the post, "which he said was only seven miles to the southwest." In the morning, "hoping to have a few extra hours at York," Oberholtzer set off impatiently on foot, leaving the Indians to follow with the canoe on the flood tide. Eventually, "wading through two swift brooks [Fountain Creek and French Creek], I came in sight of a mass of large buildings like exposition halls in a clearing high on the opposite shore. I thought every minute some Indian would see me and paddle across, but no one seemed to be looking. All those great buildings staring at me were as good as deserted. My own shore was a desolate marsh. When I came opposite the fort at last, I waved. Then I put my red handkerchief on a stick and shouted." Getting no response, he "began to realise that it would be possible to starve not half mile away from the fort. I had just a bit of chocolate in my pocket. Suppose a three days' wind and snow storm should keep Billy up that creek." Night was falling, it was raining, and dogs were howling on the far shore when Billy and the Cree brought this *contretemps* to an end by finding Oberholtzer and paddling him over to the landing.

George Ray, the district and post manager, was "as much bewildered when I handed him the letters from Churchill as I was by all the strange faces. Soon I was eating fried trout and tea and cakes and butter and all sorts of other delicacies. Then I got Billy in a tent with some Indians" — one would like to have overheard that conversation — "changed my clothes, and spent the evening telling the company in the billiard room [of Bachelors' Hall] about my trip. I had a kind and appreciative audience." While Oberholtzer talked, Ray penned his October 3rd entry in the post journal: "Cold Day & Misty. Mr. Oberholtzer arrived here from Lac De Brouche with one Indian. He will start for Winnipeg tomorrow morning, via Norway House." A canoe journey harder than most men would care to attempt still lay ahead.

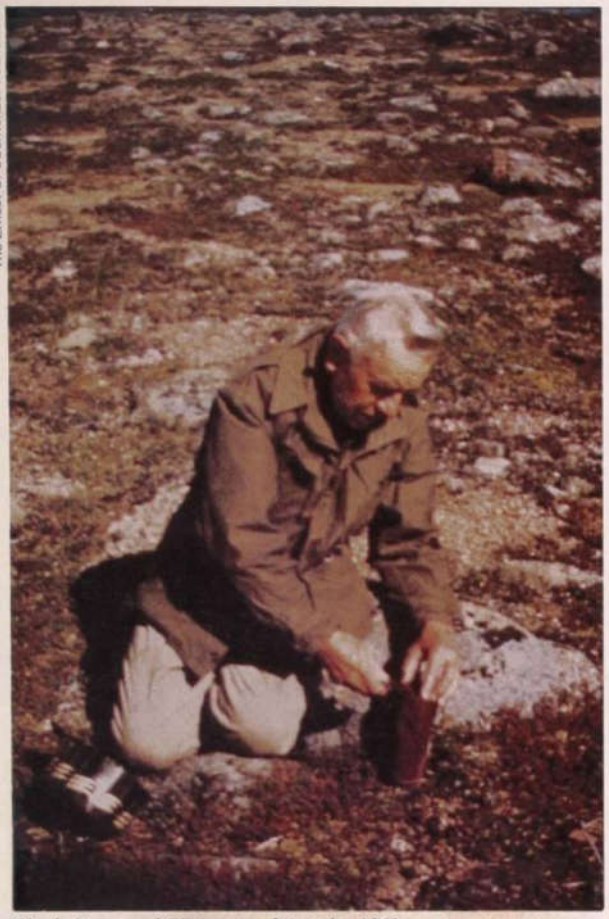
That Oberholtzer and Magee had come so far on their own, and through unexplored territory, meant little to those at York Factory. "Nothing would do, according to all the men at the fort," Oberholtzer wrote disgustedly, "but that I must go back to Oxford House with the same Indians that had brought down the last party [Messrs Whiteford, Roy, and Wells, prospectors who were shortly to board the *Beothic* for Chesterfield

Inlet]. The leader of the Indians said I might get drowned on the rapids and all the white men, as usual, were sure I would get lost. Much as I disliked tying myself to the Indians, I had to dicker with them till they agreed to take some of my packs and to see me safely over the rapids for $2.00 apiece." These backwoods opportunists were anxious to be off, but Oberholtzer would not be rushed. A visitor of the previous summer had found York Factory, which had been in decline for half a century, "a bundle of dilapidated ruins. A great many of the buildings, of which there are now twenty-six, are empty. Others are filled with old rubbish, useless nowadays. . . . Near the bank is [an] ancient graveyard, but the greater portion of it has fallen down the banks and the decaying coffins, with their ends out, are projecting, showing the remains." Oberholtzer was either oblivious to this atmosphere of encroaching decay or too preoccupied and busy to detect it. He visited the new public school for Indian and halfbreed children, which had only recently been taken charge of by Edith May Griffis, and found that "in a few weeks all these children had been taught to write remarkably well; we inspected all their slates." As he was packing in the fur depot, "the Minister's wife, Mrs. Nichols, brought me two magazines and a loaf of fresh warm bread! All the men were standing round talking and making me presents of various trifles — such as soaps, candles, and cigarettes. I got off on the rising tide at half-past ten, everybody waving me goodbye from the landing."

The Hayes River route of 400 miles between York Factory and Norway House has been described so often that its particulars can go unmentioned here. As they started upriver, Oberholtzer was in the Chestnut and Billy was tracking along the water's edge; however, "it was plain that Billy was useless for tracking. The spokesman of the Indians [Jimmy Hart] said: 'You will never reach Oxford,' and urged me to leave my canoe behind. This I would not think of doing. No leaking, lumbering tankard of an [all-wooden] Peterborough [which the Swampy Crees were using] for me. Besides, I felt sure we could easily paddle up the river. At lunch Billy said, 'No use talk. Chy it,' by which he showed that he was a man of deeds. Well, after lunch, to the amazement of the Indians and to our own glee, we hoisted the sail and paddled easily faster than the men could track." The high-spirited pair camped a mile above the professional rivermen that night. Thereafter, they were forced to do much tracking and rarely kept ahead of their rivals for long. Ten days and twenty portages from York Factory, they reached Oxford House, where "Mr. [Raymond] Bayer of the Company . . . gruffly informed me that I would not get through to Norway House before winter and then, when he found out that I had my own Indian and would not become a burdensome guest, invited me up to the house." The Oxford House entry for that far-off October 13th reads: "Mild, snowing . . . Johnny Hart and men . . . returned. A Mr. Oberholtzer came along with them. He is on his way back to civilization. He only spent about an hour here."

The Rainy Lake men seemed now to be drawing near the conclusion of their voyage. Travelling steadily up the old York boat and canoe route in an interlude of Indian summer weather, they made Sea River Falls on 18 October. The following morning, as they were ghosting past an Indian settlement, "an old fellow chopping wood" called out to them to stop. "He shook

Swampy Cree rivermen on the Hayes.



The Ernest C. Oberholtzer Foundation

Oberholtzer, aged 80, recovers his cache, 1963.

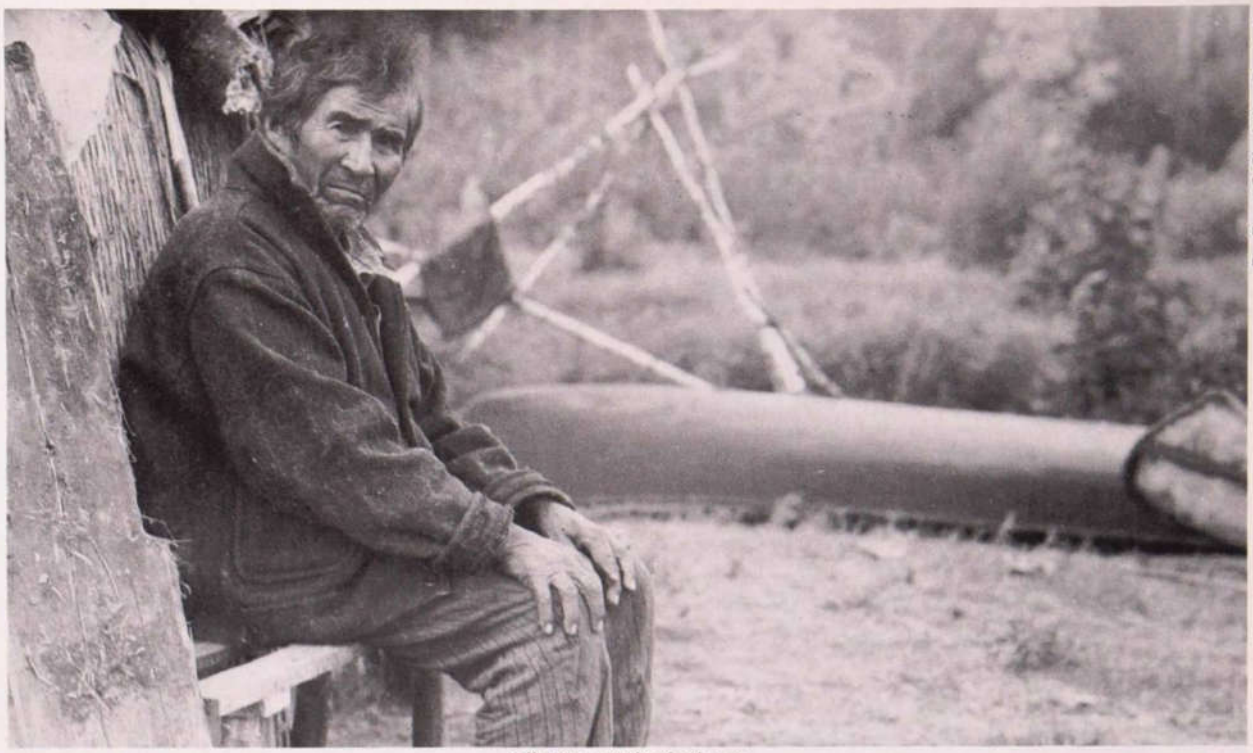
hands and spoke fair English. Talked of working for surveyors and of long trips and waterfalls and seemed to be wandering in his mind." As, leaning into their strokes, they left this gaunt, murmuring figure behind, they withdrew also from that vast, timeless wilderness which was to haunt them for the rest of their lives. After lunch, in keeping with northern tradition, they shaved and changed clothes. Soon, rounding a point, they saw before them the red roofs of Norway House.

Given what was now to occur — one last, saga-like exploit — some attempt at explanation is called for. In his post-trip correspondence, Oberholtzer was to state that his aim had been to catch the last steamer of the season south at Norway House. Yet nowhere in his journal does he mention that he expected to finish the trip by steamboat; it is therefore possible, however improbable, that he actually wished to conclude his odyssey with a punishing flourish by paddling the length of Lake Winnipeg. "A small steamer" — the *Highlander* — was being unloaded at the pier as they pulled in, but Oberholtzer, having delivered the letters from the Mounted Police at Fort Churchill, was immediately "asked to carry a sack of mail . . . and was offered $5.00, which I refused." Buying 8 pounds of pork, he "Decided to go at once and to buy more supplies at Warren's Landing." The "at once" implies, as was in fact the case, that the small steamer was to be laid up for the winter at Norway House. Curiously, while heading down Playgreen Lake that evening, they "passed a steamboat" — her course is not mentioned — "with one lantern and a chimney belching sparks." Still, his being asked to transport that sack of mail all but confirms that he and Billy constituted the last hope for southbound postal service before freeze-up, and one presumes that his characteristic stoicism kept him from lamenting, even in his diary, the crushing disappointment of facing another 250 miles of hard, dangerous paddling.

On 21 October they reached Warren's Landing, where "the boats had all been beached and appearances were very wintry. I waded through the snow to a little house where I heard chopping. An old man who kept a store was inside." Oberholtzer purchased flour, pork, prunes, and rolled oats "and found that he cheated me both in weight and in adding to the bill. Nevertheless, he came down to the beach to wish me a safe journey. He said" — it was to prove a forlorn hope — "we might be picked up by a tug somewhere down the shore."

Oberholtzer's descriptions of the rest of the trip are as trenchant as any in the journal. Squalls of snow, intermittent sunshine, northerlies, rolling seas, and surf exploding against the sands and outcrop of the whitened east shore saw them southward. They were windbound for six days. With the end now in sight, the friction that had marred certain hours of their journey was forgotten; beside their campfires, Billy, released from the fears and tensions that had dogged him, regaled his uncompromising young friend with Ojibwa myths and legends. In many ways, of course, as Oberholtzer fully understood, the two men were, and always would be, enigmatic to each other. One night, "Billy had built a bower of branches and laid his blanket across the sticks, so that we were well sheltered. Now and then he got up to peer with a lighted stick into the baker. It reminded me of some stealthy wood spirit stealing out from behind trees and retreating again into the gloom. He sat on his feet, all his body relaxed and his face as inscrutable as a sphinx." On another night, "While we were getting under the canoe for bed," Oberholtzer, teasing Billy, told him "the sort of man I had wanted for my trip. He said, 'No, he was not that sort. He was too old.' "

They raised Plunkett Island lighthouse on 28 October, Black Bear Island light on 1 November, and Gull Harbour lighthouse three days later. On 5 November they awoke to the "pleasant sounds of dogs barking,



The Ernest C. Oberholtzer Foundation.

Billy Magee in his final years.

cows lowing, and roosters crowing," and soon found themselves paddling among incurious fishermen hauling their nets. "Reached point near Gimli at half-past one o'clock," Oberholtzer wrote evenly, "and Billy cooked lunch while I walked into town to send a telegram." Later, in the village, wearing their malodorous sealskin boots, they went to separate barber shops: "Returning to the [Lake View] hotel, I did not recognize Billy sitting in the office. He had ears again and looked a new man. . . . Learned to my amazement of the Bulgarian victories in Turkey and of the Roosevelt exploits. Telegraph from home. A warm bath before bed."

On the night of the 6th they took the train from Winnipeg to Fort Frances: "Car full of lumberjacks, nearly all with whisky. One played a fiddle; others did the clog dance. I went into another car to look over my notes." The next day, Oberholtzer paid Billy $2.00 a day for the 144 days he had spent north of Rainy Lake, and got him to promise that he would deposit most of the sum in the bank. He made him presents of their blackened cooking outfit and of his own Eskimo boots, for Billy's were worn through. Then the two men shook hands.

That winter Oberholtzer sent a report on his canoe route from Theitaga Lake to the Bay and a blueprint of his sketch map — "the map is on a scale of 3 miles to the inch, made from day to day as we went along, all distances carefully estimated" — to the Dominion's Chief Geographer in Ottawa, only to have them received with polite indifference. Earlier, only days after getting home, he had written to his exemplar, Tyrrell, who answered, "It was a hazardous undertaking for you to go through that northern country with one Indian who knew nothing of it . . . and I heartily congratulate you on having made a good adventurous journey which will add materially to our knowledge of that portion of Northern Canada." But Tyrrell's expectations came to nothing. As Oberholtzer explained to Downes in 1939, "I have never published anything about this trip. It was my ambition at the time to return to the general locality for five years, but that could never be carried out and my life has been very crowded ever since."

Ernest Oberholtzer devoted the rest of his life to the cause of conservation, indefatigably leading a decades-long campaign to preserve the Quetico-Superior country as an international wilderness. Concomitantly, he pursued his profound interest in the culture of the Ojibwas; he and Billy remained the closest of friends, sharers of memories that set them apart. From his return until his death, Titapeshwewitan was a figure

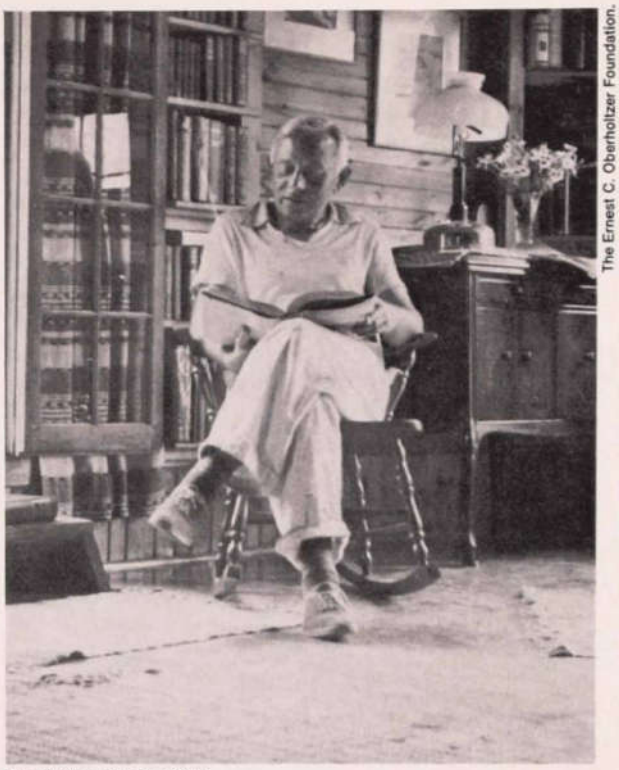
of strange authority and wonder to this fellow tribesmen, for whom he translated those far-distant, extravagant experiences into Ojibwa meanings; for him, the Nueltin Lake voyage had been equivocal, as much a spiritual as a physical journey. He died in 1938. The passing years never dimmed Oberholtzer's fond recollections of the Inuit who had befriended him and Billy; it was they whom he had wished to return to and live with for those five years. As the time remaining to him waned, he entertained thoughts of revisiting Nueltin.

White trappers had moved into that country by the end of the 1914-18 War; in 1924, one of them, "Husky" Harris, found the friction-top can that had been left on Hawkes Summit and took the note, but left the can in place. Trading posts were established at the northwestern extremities of the lake during the 1920s, but the activity of that decade soon ebbed, and by the late 1930s Nueltin was almost as isolated from the outside as it had been in 1912. Downes's 1939 reconnaissance mapping of the lake and its approaches from Theitaga proved helpful, but accurate, aerial, maps of the region did not appear until the 1950s. By 1963, commercial fishing camps had become fixtures on the lake.

That summer, Oberholtzer, now 80, and a young friend from Rainy Lake flew in, with a canoe, to one such camp on the Manitoba-NWT boundary. There one of his legs gave out and he hurt himself in several falls. Given the loan of a steel fishing boat, in which they carried the canoe, the two motored north to the Narrows. "With my own map made 51 years before," Oberholtzer later wrote, "we had not the slightest difficulty finding our way." Below Hawkes Summit, where Hearne Bay stretches southeast to the horizon, Oberholtzer crawled ashore; painfully, he dragged himself uphill among the boulders. And there, on the summit, "we located the cairn and the very same tin container in which I had left a note all that time ago . . . I have the can here now and the wonder is that it is so little rusted."

They camped on that shore for two days while Oberholtzer recuperated. Then he insisted that they revisit the northern reaches of Nutheltin — he had never forgotten the correct pronunciation taught him by Father Egenolf in 1912 — and was rewarded when he and Robert Hilke twice made camp in places where he and Billy had once eaten, talked, and slept. One final quest remained: but "at Churchill I learned that all my Eskimos died long ago, even the youngest."

When he was a young man, keen to know their ways and their lore, the Ojibwas of Rainy Lake had named Oberholtzer *Atisokan*, which means "Legend." Following his death at the age of 93 in 1977, the children and grandchildren of those Indians gathered at his Mallard Island home, made medicine, and placed the island under a protective and reverential spell. ♦



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Oberholtzer in the 1940s.

R.H. Cockburn teaches English at the University of New Brunswick, Fredericton. Professor Cockburn hopes to publish Oberholtzer's journal in its entirety as a book.

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All photographs, unless otherwise noted, are by Ernest C. Oberholtzer.

Times of Sorrow, Times of Joy

By Joe Tedjuk

I was born at Pearce Point, out west near Cape Parry. My mom, Lucy Kelak, said I was born right after my father's death. He was an Alaskan but my mother was a Copper Eskimo woman. He died from shot gun bullets right in his belly. The gun shot into him in a canoe, she said. My dad was duck hunting or seal hunting when he saw some ducks coming towards him. He grabbed his double barrelled shot gun by the barrel point. The shot gun triggers caught on the canoe seat and both barrels went off towards his belly and he died instantly. After my father died my mom named me after my father — Tedjuk.

I don't know exactly what year I was born, but my birth card says 1923, but it could be some other time close to that.

I was sent to school in the 1930s, me and my sister Emily and two other children called John Kudlaluk and Mary Tukaloak. I was about nine or ten years of age. I don't remember the names of the other children at the school. They were all children from out west, like near Holman Island.

We were put aboard a ship, a HBC supply ship called the *Baychimo,* that was going back to Tuktoyaktuk. Then from Tuk we were taken by a deacon, Thomas Umaok, an Eskimo who was made a deacon before he became a minister. The deacon took us to Shingle Point School which was run by the Anglican Church.

The girls and boys each had a house to sleep in. They were all log houses. There was also one house for cooking the meals for the children and they ate their meals there also. The older children helped with serving meals.

There was one time one summer when the supply ships never came because of the heavy ice. Boy, we were tired of beans and barley. We had to have them for breakfast, dinner and supper. Caribou and fish were better. We ate good when they served us meat and fish.

Yes, I stayed in school for six long years without seeing my mother. I was only in grade five when they sent me back home, but my sister Emily stayed in school till she was well learned. She went really far in school.

When they sent me home from school I learned many things about surviving on the land. I learned from my mom how to trap and hunt and how to survive on Eskimo food, not only on white man's food. I like seal meat, caribou meat and fish and even fox meat if it's nice and fat. With foxes you just cook the hind legs and the front legs and the ribs. You boil them until they're soft to eat. Mom also taught me to skin a rabbit or a ptarmigan and then freeze it a bit and eat it if I happened to get lost in a blizzard.

Many times it happened to me to get lost at night. I would try to get home to my seal camp. I could just open a seal and take the seal's liver out and eat it. That way you survive.

And when you are really lost in a bad storm, make a small snow house just your size for the night. Make sure your mukluk laces are loose and leave all your clothes on and rest for the night.

When you are cold go out and run around the snow house a few times to keep warm. They're long nights you know, so you have to keep moving around when you feel cold. You know in this cold land of ours during the winter time it gets pretty cold at night. That's why

you have to know what you need. Always carry a snow knife because when you have one with you, you can sleep out in the open on very bitter cold nights because you can build a snow house.

I also learned it was better to have a camp right on the sea ice. You are better off then because you can look for a seals' breathing holes in all directions from your snow house and you have a better chance to find them.

It was nice to be out in my young days, but now no one cares to hunt for seals' breathing holes. They like to run around with their fast skidoos. Even the old people are forgetting how they used to survive in the cold north land.

I'm glad the territorial school here in Cambridge Bay takes children out fishing and trapping and hunting caribou. It makes me feel happy inside my heart that someone is teaching the children our way of life. In the past when we were growing up we were always told by our elders how to survive on the land.

THIS STORY IS ABOUT myself when I decided to have Easter at Read Island. I was at Coppermine River at the time, about 1953 or 1954.

One day in April I started to think of walking to Read Island. I decided I was going to make it to Read Island by walking because I was a healthy young man. I told the couple that I was staying with that I was going to Read Island to have Easter there. They asked me how I was going to make it by walking because it's a good long one or two days' journey by dog team. They said it was going to be tough for me packing my gear. I told them I would make it because I was young and I walked good.

So I got ready. I took just a snow knife and my

Seal hunting on the ice, Western Arctic.

William Gibson

HBC Post, Read Island.

sleeping skin and a blanket and some old clothes I owned, three cooked bannocks and a chunk of frozen caribou meat. I had no primus stove, no tea kettle, no cup, nothing to make tea with.

I started off next day. It was such a nice day, too nice to stay around, so I started off all on my own with nobody to talk to except my dog walking along with me, my company.

At first I camped with the people that were sealing outside Coppermine. When I got to them I camped at one of the Eskimo's that I knew well, then next morning as soon as daylight came I was on my way north. I went straight across to Krusenstern. There were some old buildings there at one of the fur traders' houses and his old store and an Eskimo family's house, a shack I should call it.

When I got there I made some cold water and ate. I felt I should keep on so I started out towards the north. I kept on walking till I was played out. Of course I was packing my gear. My dog was walking along side of me. It always was a friendly dog.

When I got past Lambert Island I stopped near some rough ice. I went to sleep right away. I was tired from walking all day. Next morning I woke up cold and stiff from the cold so as soon as I got up from my blanket I ran around and then when I got warmed up a bit I took out a bannock from my blanket. It was soft from the warmth of my body so I ate some and gave a chunk to my dog, then off we went again northward.

Towards night time I got across to part of Victoria Island. Such a long walk it was. I was tired and thirsty so sometimes I had a chunk of rough ice. I put it in my mouth to thaw out. That way I never thirsted much, but I was cold.

Towards midnight I saw a snow mound beyond the shore line and I could see black specks or dots on it. So I went straight for it, wishing it was a seal camp and sure enough it was a snow house where someone was sealing before they went to Read Island for Easter. When I went inside it was a welcome sight to see a huge seal oil lamp and a pot, some tea, coffee and sugar and they had some seal meat. I didn't cook any seal meat, but I did make a small pot of coffee for myself. Boy, did it ever taste good. Yes, it sure did.

That night I slept very good and warm coffee was ready in the morning when I woke up. It was my third night out since I left Coppermine. I rested good for the long walk to Read Island.

On my fourth day the weather turned bad, blowing snow, but not too cold. I was fine so I kept on and on

and my next stop was at Reimer Point where all the Klengenberg family stay. I got there in late afternoon. After a good cup of tea and a smoke and something to eat I kept on towards Read Island because it's pretty close to Reimer Point. So off I went again walking, walking and when I got halfway across to Read Island the weather got worse so I decided to camp again. I had no tent, no snow house. I just slept in the open. The night was kind of dark also, so that's why I wanted to stop because I could not see where I was going.

Early the next morning I got up out of my blanket and started to warm up so I could chew on my frozen caribou meat which I had and a piece of bannock I had in my blanket. After I ate I started out once more to where I was going. Blowing snow did not matter.

I got in early to Read Island, before 9 o'clock in the morning, before the rest of the people got up. It took me four days and a half walking from Coppermine to Read Island. Yes, my double parka was frozen by the time I got to Read Island but my mukluks and duffle socks were dry. I was lucky I never got frostbite. It was pretty cold yet in April.

I was in time for Easter before the racing started. It started as soon as daytime when the people got up. My uncle Thomas Kuttik was surprised to see me. He asked me how I got to Read Island. I told him I walked all the way from Coppermine.

MY MOM SAID ONCE when she was a pretty young woman, long before she met my father Tedjuk, there were a lot of people outside the snow houses. There were also two men ready to win a wife.

These two men started pulling at my mom. She said they grabbed her anywhere and she could hear her caribou skin parka tearing. It must be pretty bad the way they wanted a wife so bad they had to pull and pull for dear life to try their best to get a woman for a wife. Her parka was tearing up even though it wasn't a calico parka or a duffle parka.

Just imagine how hard they pulled and pulled just because they needed a woman for a wife. My mom said it seemed so terrible because her parka was tearing up like a piece of calico.

One of the two men won the hard struggle as soon as he got my mom inside his snow porch door. As soon as he got her inside the snow porch the other man let go of her parka and quit pulling at her.

My mom said that was the end of the tug of war but I think she had a lot of sewing to do after it ended. She was safe though it must feel funny to get pulled like that. So that was my mother's first husband, but I don't know his name.

THIS IS ABOUT HOW the Inuit celebrated Christmas and New Year's in the 1930s and 1940s. Well, let me explain this good and clear from the start. Those are the days I'll never forget. People got together from different places. They travelled from far or close for these special days; sometimes they travelled two or three days or more just to celebrate Christmas and New Year's somewhere. In those days there were no skidoos at all, only dog teams.

Yes, the women were very busy sewing fancy mukluks and fancy parka covers for their children and their husbands and for themselves also, for these special days. Then on Christmas Eve before midnight everyone got all dressed up in nice fancy clothing. Then they got together at the fur trader's house at Read Island. He was the fur trader for the Canalaska Company. He was a nice man, a middle-aged man in his

Christmas festivities of the Copper Eskimos, circa 1930.

Richard Finnie

fifties I think, or younger. His name was Mr. Chitty something. I forget his last name.

Yes, the people got together at his house for a big festive meal. He got the Eskimo women to cook for all the people. Yes, a lot of rice, like it was over a five gallon pot filled with rice, and a lot of corned beef. In those days the first corned beef I tasted was very good.

Well anyway, the meal started in the late afternoon on Christmas Eve with a pot of rice mixed with a half dozen cans of corned beef or more, a lot of biscuits, butter, jam, lots and lots of tea and coffee. When they had eaten everything, the women cleared everything away and a tobacco can went from person to person to roll cigarettes.

After that they started up one of those old time record players you have to keep winding and keep putting new needles on. Then the square dance began with everyone enjoying themselves, old or young, while children played outside in the moonlight.

After the square dance a drum dance began for the older people and when it was getting late the alarm clocks were set to ring at 12 o'clock midnight. The people kept dancing till the alarm clocks rang at midnight time. As soon as they rang everyone began shaking hands for Merry Christmas and they went out to the ones at home at their snow houses. A lot of people ran down to say Merry Christmas at the shoreline. You could see people running into snow houses, snow porches caving in, I mean breaking up and the small doorways also. They were running to the people on the sleeping benches, even with the snow still on their mukluks, having a great time. Pots and kettles rattling, they ran from snow house to snow house. The same thing happened, snow porches coming down, doorways getting bigger also but the owners didn't mind because that was their way to celebrate these special days. After that everyone went back to where they were having the square dance and drum dance. Yes, they danced all night.

Then on Christmas Day the men got ready for the big dog team race. Those were the days to watch a good dog team race. In those days you could see some nice looking teams. Some had to have two anchors on each side of the sled to keep them still while hitching them up. Many of them had a hard time with their team when the leader didn't listen good to their driver. Sometimes 20 or 30 teams raced for 10 or 15 miles and back.

Most of the drivers were sweating, wearing double fur parkas and fur pants, dressed up warm. The ones that were not in the dog team race had a foot race or they played ball or played tag or wrestling, skipped ropes or pulled with rope tug of war or did high jumping and saw how far they could jump.

Yes, those were the days when I enjoyed my Christmas and New Year's time, even Easter time. After the dog teams raced on Christmas Day everyone went home for awhile and then they got together for a service. Even if they didn't have a minister or a priest they had a special service for Christmas. A young man would lead the service, everyone would join him in prayers and Christmas hymns. Most of all I liked it when they were singing "Holy Night, Peaceful Night".

Now for New Year's how they celebrated. Well, on New Year's Eve same thing like games, dances, drum dances and a good meal before they started dancing.

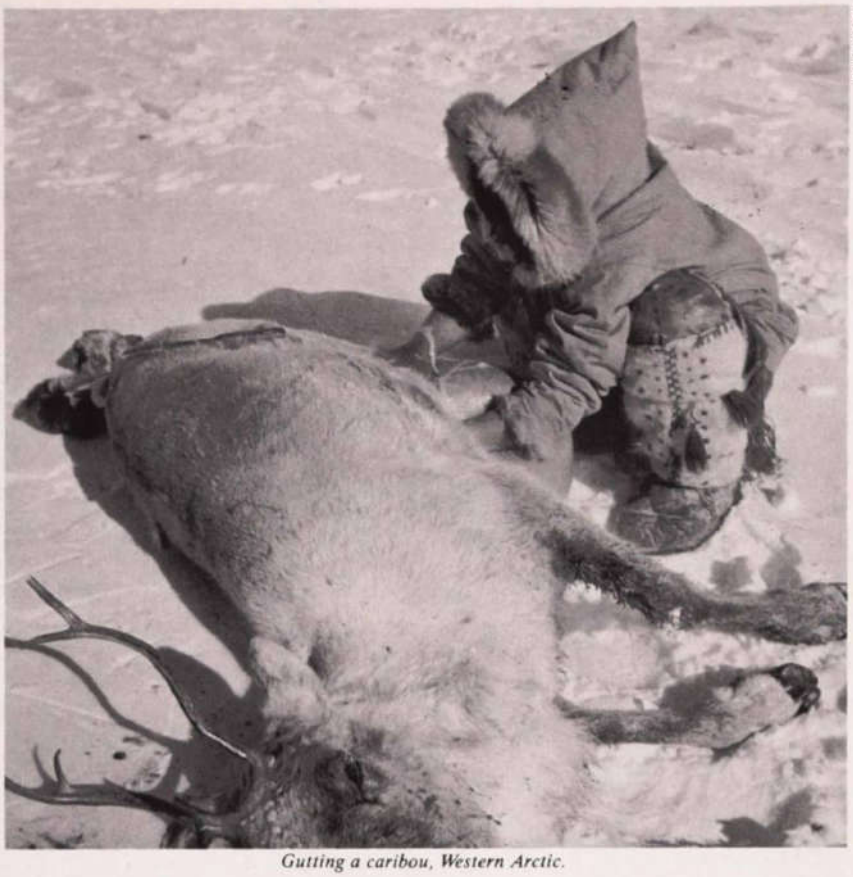
The games were for men and women, young and old. The men pulled arms or fingers or kneeled on the floor pushing each other by their foreheads and even had a game with a piece of string. The string goes around the ear of a man and another man's ear as well. Then they pull backwards. It's pretty sore on the ear, that string. After that they kneel on the floor. When the starter says "go" they grab their toes and walk on their knees, racing to the other end and back to where they started from.

They had skipping too. Two guys would each hold one end of a rope and they would let the rope go around and round the skipper until he was either played out or tired. The other kind of skipping had a caribou skin tied onto the middle of the rope. We call it *evotaun*. Yes, you have to be careful with this one or otherwise you'll have a bad fall. If it touched you on a leg or foot you tumbled over quick. I saw a lot of young girls and women skip so nice, just like dancing. Some of them, their feet were so fast you could hardly see their feet moving. Yes, some were real good at it, in the foot work while skipping.

Let's see now about the women's games. One of them was who is going to thread a needle first. You know everyone was having fun, laughing and having a great time in those days.

Yes, the same thing happened in the evening. The alarm clock was set for 12 o'clock midnight. This happened in the 1940s and 1930s every year on New Year's Eve. Well, as soon as the alarm clocks rang at midnight all the men rushed outside to their rifles to bang the old year away for the New Year. Yes, each man took three shots up in the air. Yes, it was their way of doing it. So the New Year could be better, they said.

After they rushed in, dancing around the floor, shaking hands with everyone, saying "Happy New Year" to all, then they rushed out again, running down to the snow houses. Yes, the same thing happened. Snow porches falling down, doorways breaking in, people walking on sleeping skins. A lot of snow on their mukluks, but the owners don't mind. Pots and kettles rattling. Well, it was their way of celebrating Christmas and New Year's. All through the years I spent my Christmas and New Year's like this. Those were splendid years of life on Read Island. The people there were mixed up from three different places, Copper


D.B. Marsh

Gutting a caribou, Western Arctic.

Eskimos, Prince Albert Sound people, and I do not know where all of the Klengenberg family was from.

THIS IS A TRUE STORY about Prince Albert Sound people. These they call the Kagiyuoamiot people, living near Prince Albert Sound and right at Prince Albert Sound.

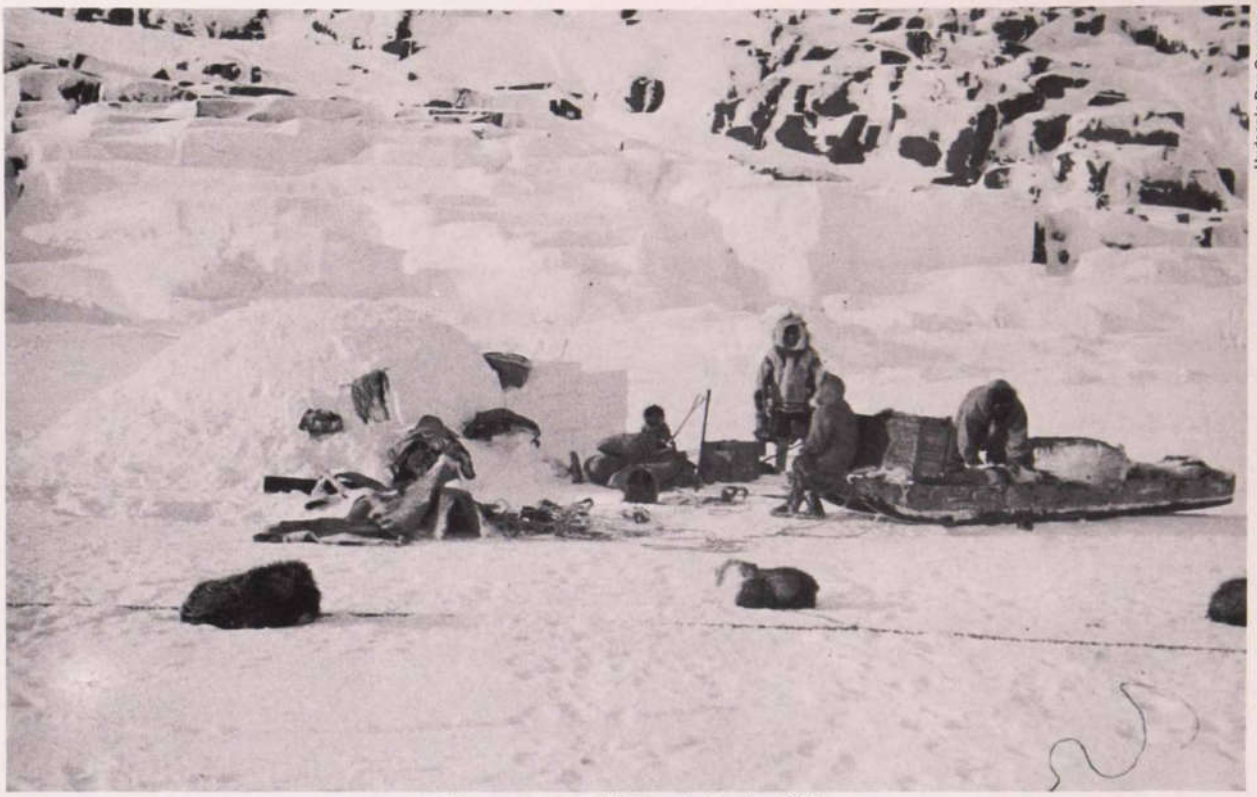
This story is about old times at Prince Albert Sound, which is near Holman Island or Walker Bay. I heard about these old times from an old time woman named Mary Eukaina. She said she was a young woman at the time she was telling about. I think it was in the 1800s, it must be. When I saw her in my young days, in the early 1940s I believe it was, she was a pretty old woman.

She told me of their starvation at Prince Albert Sound when she was a young woman. At that time it was very poor sealing because out beyond Prince Albert Sound there was a lot of rough ice. They had to move their winter camp around a lot to look for better sealing places. She said people were starving at that time. They had to try to keep warm some way, but it was no use because there was too much rough ice and they could not get any seals.

They had to leave many people at that time when they were moving camp because they could not walk at all because they were starving and freezing to death. It was a pity she said, but there was no way to save them because they were weak from no food at all and no seal oil to keep them warm from the cold bitter winter they had.

She said very few people made it; she was one of them to survive. The only way a very few of them survived was to eat some of the dead people to keep themselves alive. So she was one of them to eat a human being. She told me she had to try a human being's nose, then some other part. She said a nickname they called her was Kingak, a nose, which is what she ate first of the dead person. But anyways, she managed to keep herself alive.

Others also survived with her from the awful starvation that year of very poor sealing. My uncle James Kavanna says he remembers talking to one of the survivors, but he forgets his name. He said the survivors heard someone outside the snow house. Then one of them said, "Listen, someone is walking outside. It seems as though he has good heels to eat."



Hudson's Bay Company

Eskimo encampment, Western Arctic, circa 1940.

Then Mary Eukaina said spring came by with nice warm days, but yet they were struggling for dear life till they got to the land where there were birds and mice. Oh, she said it was a much better life when the spring time came. It was much warmer than the cold winter nights. There were birds, ducks and geese and all sorts of creatures and fish in the lakes. There was moss and willows for making fires, then flowers showing.

They kept on the land, going to their fishing place and hunting ground. She said it was a better life then when they began to eat birds and birds eggs, then lemmings and fish at the lakes.

They had hardly any sleeping skins and clothing after their hard winter. There were not many seals, just an odd one she said, not enough to keep the few families alive. Yet she and her husband were among the few families to survive when spring came by. The men went hunting, while the women were fishing at the lake, then life was much better for them. Yes, she said it was a mean life when the people were starving and freezing to death, but they kept thinking of trying to survive, even by eating human flesh and blood.

Also I will never forget a couple of times in Coppermine in the late 1940s and in the early 1950s. I was working at one of the missionaries — the Anglican minister Mr. Webster at Coppermine. The inland people had to travel down to the Coppermine River settlement. Most of the people were inland. As usual every spring they went into Coppermine or to the fur trader L.F. Semmler at Krusenstern north of the Coppermine River by dog team. At Coppermine Mr. Learmonth was the HBC manager along with an Eskimo girl named Paulette Anigoluk.

Sometime before 1955 the inland people had a bit of a hard time because the caribou were kind of gone, not like they used to be in great herds. The inland people had to leave inland where they used to live happily with lots to eat like dry meat and frozen meat. Most of the people had just about nothing to eat for their teams of dogs. Each time they camped they had to kill one of their dogs to feed the rest of their team with and most of them had just enough for their children to eat.

No one starved at that time, but most of them lost a lot of dogs, good dogs, because of no dog food. Yes, you must have a lot of dog food to keep a team in good shape. Most of the people just barely made it into Coppermine. The RCMP in Coppermine helped them out at that time because there were no social workers.

Then after a year again in Coppermine, we had a poor year for seals, caribou and fish and lot of the inland people, the ones we call *nunamiut*, were at a seal camp outside of Coppermine. There was a big camp because there were a lot of people from inland and from Coppermine too who were sealing at the seal camp about 16 or 14 miles out from Coppermine.

I saw the RCMP at Coppermine giving dog food and some food so they would be able to try and seal at the seal camp. Yes, I saw some people boiling rice with seal skin at that time. It was a pitiful sight at first.

Yes, in some years it is a hard life. I saw it many, many times myself. During the winter time you have to keep moving, looking for seals' breathing holes and sometimes there's nothing at all no matter how much you look around.

Yes, it must have been a very tough life for the old timers because I know what it was like in the early 1940s. We had to hunt and trap and make our living, trying to support ourselves. Sometimes we had to go out in very cold weather, sealing for our food. Yes, sometimes there was hardly any decent place for sealing and sometimes you were hungry and cold. Sometimes there was no warmth at all until you got home to your snow house and hardly anything to eat except a cup of tea and a pilot biscuit or a piece of bannock. I went through all this myself in my young days.

That's why I think back about these old times people. They had no flour or tea for eating while they were moving from camp to camp, looking for a good sealing place.

SOMETIMES I THINK BACK to my young days when I was out every day sealing through the seals' breathing holes, sealing all day till dark time. Sometimes there were no seals at all. When you were lucky you got one or two seals. Besides that, when I wasn't sealing I went out hunting rabbits or ptarmigans, to try to get something to eat. Those were the days I lived happy, no worries at all those days, yes sir.

Coppermine at the mouth of the Coppermine River, circa 1930.

RCAF

In the olden days the people hunted caribou with bows and arrows. During the summer time the men got together and stood up rocks in a straight line or angled away and near the lakes. Then the women and children drove the caribou towards these *inukhuks* and also toward the men who were waiting in hollow dug outs in the ground. They call these dug outs *talut*. In front of them they had a small pile of rocks so they could hardly be seen by the caribou walking by. The men waited in these dug outs with their bows and arrows near them ready for use while the women held hands and drove the herd of caribou along the *inukhuks*.

When they made the inukhuks they put a chunk of black ground on top to look like a person's head. It must have been a lot of fun for the women and children to drive the herd towards the waiting men, and the men must have been very experienced to hunt with only bows and arrows.

When I was pretty young there was a big herd of caribou inland. A bunch of us young people were going to try hunting with bows and arrows. We were ahead of the herd waiting on a small cliff. When the herd got close we began shooting our arrows. I tried my best and took careful aim but my arrow just wanted to land on the hind quarters only. I don't think any of us got any caribou, but it was a lot of fun.

After trying out our bows and arrows I sat down on a rock thinking hard about how the hunters with bows and arrows ever got what they were after. Then one boy said I think we should aim a little ahead of a caribou. I said I did but our arrows seemed useless compared with the old timers' bows and arrows. Anyway we had fun, but we were helpless with our bows and arrows.

I have seen a lot of *inukhuks* and dug outs near Mount Pelly when I walk up that way. You could also see old camping places, even on this side of Grenier Lake. Talk about caribou bones and antlers. One time there must have been a lot of caribou — maybe in the 1600s or 1700s because some of the bones are in the ground at the river above the bridge. It looks like the people had plenty to eat year-round because of all the bones and antlers.

There are also fish traps on the river here where the old timers used to spear fish with their *kakivaks* or *noiyapak*. I think it must have been hard work for the men to make the fish traps because some of the rocks are large for one man to handle. There are places where they stacked away the fish for winter too, and caribou and seal meat.

IN THE 1940s AND 1950s Eskimo people used to stay inland around Contwoyto Lake, *Tahikyoak* they call it in Eskimo. They lived well off the land, hunting caribou and drying skins.

At that time the skins of caribou were used for clothing and sleeping skins. Even the white belly parts were dried up to put away for trimmings for fancy parkas and fancy mukluks. The men used to wear fancy outside pants and fancy deerskin mitts with strips of white caribou belly skin. It was a lot of work to make them. The people dried up the skins of caribou and used every part of it, even the sinew. They dried the fat of the bulls caught in the fall time when they are fat and used it for eating and for the caribou fat lamps. They used the caribou fat like seal oil for burning. The caribou fat burns nicer than seal oil in lamps because seal oil smokes so much.

In the late summer the women were busy making deer skin tents. Some were large for big families, and they were nice and warm. They made a window by scraping all the deer hair off a skin and making it as thin as possible. Yes, before the snow came the men and women were busy baling skins and putting dry meat and dry deer fat and even the fresh meat in stacks ready for the winter. The women made deer skin bags for the dry meat and deer fat. They did the same with wolf skins and wolverine skins and I saw some people get bobcats.

Then when it looked like it was freeze-up time, the men got ready for the trip to the Coppermine River HBC post to trade.

I had a couple of summers with the inland people near Contwoyto Lake on July First. I really enjoyed my first summer, my first July First. Boy, there were all sorts of games and rifle-shooting contests.

One game I liked is one called *napajak* which was played with a piece of wood like a piece of carrot with a nail at the tip which was made very sharp. At first you started by balancing it by its tip on the back of your hand and flipping it up and making it fall and stick into a piece of wood. Then you would put it on the palm of your hand and then you started with all your fingers. You had to watch yourself and try not to poke yourself because it was very sharp.

Then you put it on your wrist, then on your elbow and shoulders. You had to flip it off all these places and make it fall and stick into the piece of wood. Then you would grab both your ears, then flip it up off your nose, forehead and chin and make it stick into the piece of wood. Then you would finish by flipping it from the top of your head.

Sometimes their noses and chins would be bleeding because it was so sharp. Sometimes they played it all night long. This game is a lot of fun, but that stick is too sharp for the top of the nose and the finger tips and wrist.

After all the games were played they had a big meal of cooked meat and dry meat and deer fat. Oh, yes, while the games were going on the women were busy cooking meat and bannock and boiling a lot of tea

Hudson's Bay Company

Building a snow house in the old way, late 1930s.

because Eskimos drink a lot of tea after eating. Some pounded up the caribou leg bones. They split them first then pounded them up and put them in a pot to melt the fat. Then they dumped the melted fat into a large pan and cut up small pieces of dry meat and put it into the fat then mixed it up like pudding. It tastes so good when it's well made. They call it *akutuk*.

Yes, when I was inland among the Eskimos I never went hungry at all and I never thought of eating bread because they had a lot of dry meat and fat marrow, but sometimes it was too oily. Also they put blood in part of the caribou stomach then hung it up to make it smelly, but not too much. They called it *aopak*. Boy, it's so good. It has a kind of strong smell, but is good to eat.

They also put some caribou leg marrow in a caribou stomach and hung it up on racks to get smelly, but not too much. They used it for eating with dry meat. And they put all the caribou feet in water and cooked them until they were soft to eat.

And when my mom was alive in the 1930s and 1940s my step-dad, who was a white man, a trapper, used to have special food like pigs' feet in small wooden barrels of brine or something. I used to go crazy for it. Then he used to make home-made ice cream and butterscotch fudge which were a treat for us in those days. He also made home-made pies, cakes and cookies. He was a great cook.

NOW I'M ABOUT 62 YEARS OLD and I'm still in good shape, but I can't hear any more except with a hearing aid and my legs are pretty sore sometimes. My legs seem too weak for hard work now.

I live with a woman named Anna Taptoona. We are both on welfare. Yes, my legs bother me a lot more in the winter time when it's cold, but I manage it, though in my younger days there was nothing to worry for food for ourselves because in winter time I stayed out sealing on the sea ice.

That was great fun for me. I used to keep building snow houses and had a seal oil lamp to keep me warm through the long winter days. I loved sealing when I was about 19 or 20 years of age. I never worried about flour and white men's food as long as I had tea, tobacco, matches. In those days I never felt cold at all except in the morning when first getting up to light our primus stove to make a cup of tea. My favorite food was seal liver and seal lungs along with my cup of tea and small chunks of cooked seal meat. Yes, but now coffee with

toast and butter and jam for breakfast. Long time ago we never had them, mostly tea and bannock, seal lungs or liver and cooked seal meat along with brain in my old days.

I had a wife named Flora Tukluk; she was an outwest woman. I had nine children with her, but she left me after we had nine children, sometime in the 1970s. But now again I found my love Anna Taptoona. She is weak, having fits all the time, but yet I love her just the same. I think I love her more than Flora, not because she is pretty, but I feel through my heart she needs a person to look after her.

Yes, it's a great life for me and Anna in the springtime. Yes, when we must stay in the house all winter long like a brown bear stays inside all winter long then spring comes up and it's nice and warm outside, 24-hour sun. It makes Anna and me feel like going out fishing again. Yes, it's better for Anna because she has to have a lot of fresh air outside, but in cold weather and rain we stay inside our tent until it's good again for fishing. Anna is young and weak. She takes pills all the time. She can't work or cook, but I love her so much through my heart. Yes, it makes it hard for me because her children can't look after her. They leave her alone most of the time.

But Anna likes fishing in the springtime so much even though she is weak and even though she can't cut fish. Only me, I have to do everything — cut fish, put them to dry, get water for tea, cook for her after I fish all day long. But she is a good fisherman.

We don't sleep much while it's good fishing. Sometimes we sleep ony two or three hours, then we are up again, bright and early like a bird. We take what we need and usually stay out all day on the ice fishing. I always carry a lot of dry fish with us on the boat and a lot of tea, coffee and sugar. We don't care much for bread and white people's food. But if we have no fish or any kind of meat of course we have to have something to eat like a tin of Klik or sardines or cheese.

Sometimes we are out on the ice 13 or 14 hours each day. Then we go home to our tent at late night time so I can cut up the fish for drying. I put salt on them then hang them up on the fish racks. It's a lot of work for a man, but once they dry they are good eating with a good cup of tea or coffee. It's good to have some dry fish for the fall time.

When we go out fishing I also take a little tent and blanket and a sleeping skin in case we get tired and don't want to go back to our camp. I just carry them along, even if we don't use them at all. That's how my mom taught me, always to carry anything that might come in handy. I also bring a gas stove, spare jiggle sticks with nylon line on them, our ice chisel, an axe, a knife and a file. I never leave them behind. They come in handy, these things, when you need them.

We don't use a kicker [outboard motor]. I use my arms as a kicker. I don't need spare spark plugs or gas. I oar all the time. I have more fun oaring, even on windy days or calm days. I take my time. There's no rush at all. I try to look for a good spot for fishing. When we find a spot, I pull up the boat on the ice and make sure it won't slide back into the water.

It's good to be outside the settlement of Cambridge Bay instead of being in the house all spring and summer. There's nice fresh air outside the community and it's nice to have good camp tea and a good meal of fish cooked or dry and also the fish eggs and liver. We eat them raw. Sometimes when we have enough I dry them up for a snack, like snack bars.

I don't understand why some people just like to stay in the settlement. Most of them are on welfare. They could stay near the lake to fish while it's so nice to be in camp near the fishing instead of staying at the houses gambling or drinking, only visiting from house to house. Yes it's good to be out when it's nice and warm.

Boy, I love fishing. That's one thing I don't want to quit — fishing outdoors. Now I have a fishing rod to fish with I just love casting out and pulling in fish. That's one thing I will like until I have to crawl on my knees.

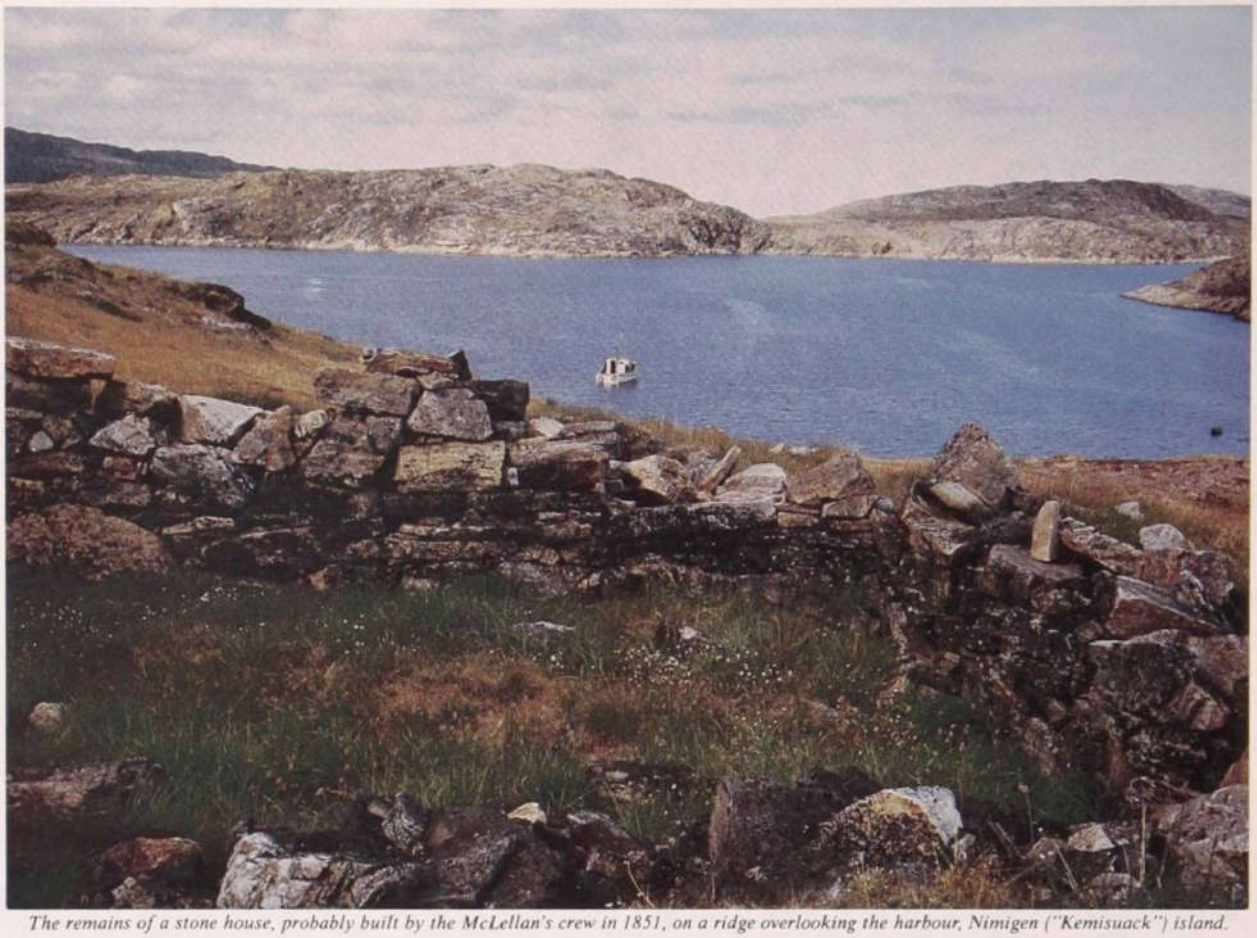
Each summer about late July, August, there's some visitors come to Cambridge Bay to fish for char. A few are from Edmonton, Alberta. I saw a few of them and made friends with them. Some look pretty strange to me. I mean, they seem to not like Eskimos or they are shy to meet an Eskimo like me. Yes, well life is life and an eye is an eye and love is love. The main thing in the world is that we should love one another. But some people don't know what love is or how to be friendly with others.

You know, there are times of sorrow, weary weeping for loved ones when they die, because we cannot replace a person that died who we love so much. When we lose something, anything like clothing or tools or anything, we can replace it from the stores, but a person can't be replaced. ♦

Joe Tedjuk lives at Cambridge Bay in the Northwest Territories. His autobiography, from which "Times of Sorrow, Times of Joy" was derived, will be published by the Kitikmeot Inuit Association, Box 18, Cambridge Bay, Northwest Territories, X0E 0C0.

THE LAST VOYAGE OF THE McLELLAN

By Philip Goldring



The remains of a stone house, probably built by the McLellan's crew in 1851, on a ridge overlooking the harbour, Nimigen ("Kemisuack") island.

To many Canadians, the story of Arctic discovery is mainly the record of explorers from the Royal Navy and the Hudson's Bay Company, who searched the central Arctic for a north-west passage during half a century after 1818. No so well-known are the men who charted and exploited the *eastern* Arctic in the same period. In these years the enormous Bowhead whales along Baffin Island's coasts were hunted by commercial whalers — Yorkshiremen from Hull, Scots from Dundee and Aberdeenshire, and Yankees from Connecticut and Massachusetts.

After 1820, ironically, official explorers hurried by Davis Strait and the shores of Baffin Island in their anxiety to learn what lay further west. While the British public enthusiastically debated each new clue to the riddle of the north-west passage, the masters of whaling vessels were quietly confirming and completing the discoveries made by Frobisher and Davis before 1590.

Relations were rather cool between the whalers and the Royal Navy's "discovery men". Their differences showed most clearly in one fascinating incident off the coast of Greenland, the wreck of the American whaler *McLellan*. When this Connecticut whaling ship was crushed on 7 July 1852, her captain was trying to reach twelve men he had put ashore on southern Baffin Island eight months before. Although such sinkings were common and no lives were lost, the last voyage of the *McLellan* attracted international attention and began a new era in Eastern Arctic whaling.

In the 1840s the American whaling fleet reached its peak of more than 700 vessels — about three-quarters of the globe's whaling ships. Yankee enterprise was neglecting only one of the world's great whaling grounds, the Bowhead fishery of Davis Strait. In 1846 an American whaling agent rectified this oversight by

The engraving above the title on page 39 is "Loss of the McLellan" by W.W. May. It is not certain which of the vessels is actually the McLellan. Illustration from the Public Archives of Canada.

training a crew in the lost skills of the Greenland "fishery". Perkins and Smith of New London, Connecticut, bought the 366-ton ship *McLellan* and sent her whaling in the Arctic under Captain Jeremiah Slate. The crew and other officers, however, were mostly recruited from the British whaling port of Hull. In her seven voyages to Davis Strait the *McLellan* trained some of the most important American Arctic whalers and navigators of the next generation. Learning from men like the icemaster, William Jackson of Hull, the *McLellan's* few American crewmen rekindled the skills of Arctic seamanship and whale-hunting that their countrymen had lost.

The *McLellan's* first Arctic voyage lasted just five months and returned only one whale, but it was an enormous one — 160 barrels of oil and over a ton of baleen (whalebone) suggest a whale at least 50 feet long. This would not have covered expenses, but as a training exercise it succeeded. The 1847 voyage under Captain Perkins lasted seven months, and the *McLellan* returned to New London with 845 sealskins, 1,111 barrels of oil and 15,000 pounds of baleen. In 1848 the *McLellan* took eight whales, and the next three voyages yielded 1,450 more barrels of oil and 23,900 pounds of bone. If average prices were realized, the six voyages from 1846 to 1851 grossed about $37,000 for Perkins and Smith and another $16,500 for officers and crew. At least 30 whales must have been slaughtered in this period.

The *McLellan* followed the usual routine of the British whaling fleet. By 1815 overhunting east of Greenland forced almost all the whalers to cruise in Davis Strait. They gradually pushed north along Greenland until 1817-18, when both whalers and discovery ships found that whales were abundant near the "west land" (Baffin Island) as well, off Pond Inlet. A new pattern was set in the 1820s: vessels left their British home ports in the spring, took what whales they could east of Greenland, rounded Cape Farewell, sailed north into Baffin Bay, and picked their way through the dreaded "middle pack" to reach clearer sailing along the west land. They filled their holds — if they could — by hunting in the waters off Pond Inlet, or in Lancaster Sound, and then along the north-

A ringed seal rises to breathe in front of Blacklead Island, Cumberland Sound.

east coast of Baffin Island. After 1840 the season was extended to include an autumn hunt in Cumberland Sound, the deep coastal indentation at the south-west tip of Baffin Island. Then the whalers, whether successful or not, sailed home in time to avoid the Arctic winter.

The *McLellan* fitted into the opportunities and hazards of this industry, joining the British fleet every year somewhere off Greenland. In 1849 she rescued men from two wrecked British whalers, and in 1850 the *Times* of London mentioned her among the vessels fortunate enough to break through the middle pack to the west side; she finished her season in Cumberland Sound. In 1851 Captain Quayle took the *McLellan* into Cumberland Sound again for the autumn whaling. Still disappointed by a poor catch, he made the historic decision to leave part of his crew behind under first mate Sydney O. Buddington.

The Inuit of Cumberland Sound regularly reported that migrating whales were abundant in spring, six weeks before vessels could work through the ice to reach them. To test this report, Quayle left his first mate, carpenter, and ten other crewmen to winter with the Inuit on a little island which was the whalemen's usual rendezvous. The men who built their stone-walled hut on the island of "Kemisuack" (now officially Nimigen) were the first non-native party to winter intentionally in Baffin Island waters since Frobisher's men in 1577-78. Buddington's success in the spring whaling, and the publicity that accompanied his party's return to the world outside, changed the character of eastern Arctic whaling and the lives of the Inuit who befriended them.

No logs survive from the *McLellan's* voyages, but her last cruise was well-chronicled. Leaving New London on 26 February, Quayle had already taken three "fish", as the huge mammals were ironically called, when the whaling fleet entered the middle pack. On 30 June the Scottish whaler *Regalia* was crushed, and Quayle took one boat's crew aboard. A week later the American found his own position precarious. He had moved out ahead of 13 British whalers and a naval fleet headed by *HMS Assistance*. This party, an official search for Sir John Franklin's lost expedition, kept prudently astern of the more experienced whalers as they probed the "leads" of frigid water running into the pack.

Aboard the steamer *HMS Intrepid* Leopold McClintock penned his impressions of the sorry state of the whaling industry. The 24-year-old *McLellan*, he wrote, was among the newest vessels in the fleet, and her foreign captain was the most ambitious of the masters.

> Their threadbare fit out of sails & rigging plainly show that this once flourishing fishery is reduced to a desperate speculation. This is the seventh year of the American's fishing in Davis Straits, & he alone has enterprise enough to change the system . . . . His plan is this. Instead of large ill found slow vessels, employ small swift strong ones expressly built for ice work, & these to co-operate with whaling stations on shore; last year [he] left thirteen men at an Esquimaux station called "Kemisok" in Cumberland Straits (Inlet), with boats harpoons & a year's provisions, their object is to kill whales in the summer before the ice permits ships to approach, & to barter with the natives who also kill whales.

Calamity struck the *McLellan* on 7 July. Her crew set out ahead of the ship with ropes to begin tracking her through narrow leads towards open water. Quayle impressed the British commander, Sir Edward Belcher, as "one of the most expert, go-ahead, intelligent & steady men in this fleet", but his initiative cost him his ship. As the floes closed in, the vessels sent their crews onto the ice to saw docks into the huge floating pans. The crew of *HMS Assistance* took only an hour and a quarter to cut 200 metres through ice almost a metre thick; three ships were not so successful. Before their docks were complete the *McLellan*, *HMS North Star* and the British whaler *Alexander* were all nipped as the huge floes ground together around them.

Here the discipline of the Royal Navy collided with the traditions of the whaling fleet. When a ship was in serious trouble in the ice or on the whaling grounds, the usual practice was to surrender authority to the six or seven junior officers who led the individual whaleboats — the "boatsteerers". When a boatsteerer decided to abandon ship he sent his whaleboat to the ice. Each sailor belonging to that boat could then remove his clothes from the ship. Provisions and equipment were thrown overboard, liquor kegs were broached and the wreck site began to resemble a country fair. Crews of nearby vessels eagerly helped plunder the wreck; then the hulk was burnt so it would not become a hazard to navigation. The masters were powerless to change the tradition of the ice-pack. These customs could lead to what Belcher called "precipitate abandonment" of vessels that were not yet past hope. The whaling men, he reported, "are very little removed from the savages of the [South] Seas."

Belcher spoiled the wreck for the whalemen by sending his carpenter to the damaged vessel. Quayle coaxed his crew into helping repair her starboard broadside and by day's end her mate pronounced her "better than before she was nipped". The relief was short-lived; pressure built up overnight, the repairs gave way, and the ship was given up for lost.

Again the looters were thwarted. An officer took a naval party to get provisions off for the *McLellan's* crew: then Belcher bought the wreck from Quayle.

"The poor fellow", wrote Lieut. May of *HMS Assistance*, "appeared heartily glad that on such a trying occasion he should find so good a customer and ready payment as the English government."

The *McLellan* wallowed in icy waters for over a week, her oil-soaked timber refusing to sink. Belcher took what he could and pointed his ships towards Lancaster Sound and the futile search for Franklin. On 21 July the whalers started tracking their vessels to the south. Quayle's crew was scattered around the fleet, the American himself boarding the 98-year-old Hull whaler *Truelove*. The fleet turned towards Cumberland Sound and the waiting party of wintering whalers.

The voyage south tried Quayle's patience. Captain Parker had offered the *Truelove's* services, but he continued to probe the bays and harbours in search of whales. The season was nearly over before the vessel reached Niantilic, a small inhabited island on the south side of Cumberland Sound and the first point where news of Buddington's men could be expected.

Even here, Captain Parker waited around Niantilic and Blacklead Island to catch a few whales. During the wait an American whaleboat approached. Aboard the *Truelove*, excitement turned quickly to worry when the whalers realized the boat was crewed not by Buddington's men but by Inuit wearing the Americans' clothing. They were also carrying firearms.

These people reassured the British and Americans, telling them Buddington's men were still at Kemisuack. There were more tense moments when Kemisuack was also found abandoned, but the Inuit then said the men must be further north at Nuvujen, a place previously unknown to whalers. All fears were soon quelled when the missing Americans appeared in a whaleboat, wearing the sealskin clothes of the Inuit. They reported they had not had a day's sickness since the *McLellan* set them ashore in 1851.

The story they had to tell was simple and encouraging. The men had gone ashore at one of the harbours of Kemisuack (Nimigen) Island. They built a stone-walled house, roofed it with spars and canvas (or, some accounts say, with sealskin) and banked it with sod and snow. There they lived about as comfortably as men can in such circumstances, on completely friendly

Modern visitors go ashore at Nuvujen. The first commercial spring whaling was carried out from here in 1852. In the late fifties and early sixties of the last century at least two whaling stations stood on the ridge left of centre.

terms with the Inuit and with few serious quarrels among themselves. When their small supply of coal gave out, the Inuit led them to the skeleton of a whale. Its bones provided enough oil for the rest of the winter. Throughout the winter Inuit and whalemen exchanged country food and imported provisions to their mutual benefit.

With the arrival of warmer weather, Buddington and his men tried the whaling at the floe edge. The pack broke up towards the nearby island of Nuvujen, the small party followed the whales and caught ten of them. The carcasses were "cut in" at the floe edge and the blubber and baleen were hauled back to Nuvujen on sleds. These whales represented a substantial return for the last voyage of the *McLellan*. According to the custom of the whaling grounds, Captains Quayle and Parker had to pay the *Truelove's* crew to get consent to take Buddington's catch aboard the English vessel. Once this was done, the *Truelove* left the whaling grounds and the New London whalers' last cargo was shipped to Hull.

All doubt was removed: wintering parties could hunt whales profitably long before vessels could get into the gulf from Britain or New England. The whalers changed their tactics. Previously a few vessels visited Cumberland Sound for a month in autumn. Beginning in 1853, Perkins and Smith and British whaling agents sent ships to spend the winter locked into the ice. Furthermore, from 1857 onwards there was always at least one year-round station in Cumberland Sound, to aid wintering vessels or to provide a base for spring whaling.

The last voyage of the *McLellan* changed the fortunes of many people. Whaling boomed in the Eastern Arctic in spite of a general decline in the industry. But the Americans gave up the dangerous passage of Davis Strait, limiting their range to the more southerly waters around Cumberland Sound and Hudson Strait. Sydney Buddington and George Tyson became captains of their own vessels, visiting Baffin waters almost every year. They teamed up in 1871 in Charles F. Hall's disastrous attempt to reach the North Pole in the *Polaris*. Christopher Chapel, another *McLellan* veteran, also became a captain; with his brother Edward he expanded American whaling into north-west Hudson Bay in 1860. For 15 years the Americans enjoyed highly profitable whaling in Cumberland Sound, Hudson Strait and Hudson Bay. Even after overfishing brought an inevitable decline in the early seventies, American vessels visited Cumberland Sound regularly until the 1890s.

The changes were most profound for the Inuit. Before 1851, their trade with the whalers was intermittent and opportunistic. Buddington's success at the spring whaling in 1852 changed that, but at a cost for the people. There are no reliable figures, but new diseases may have cost the Cumberland Sound Inuit more than half their numbers between 1850 and 1860.

Working out of whaling stations or from wintering vessels, the Inuit crewed whaleboats and hunted seals and caribou to feed and clothe the whalers. They were paid not in money but with rifles, binoculars, wooden whaleboats and other manufactured goods. With these tools their hunting became more efficient and their annual routine changed to meet the seasonal needs of the whaling stations. After 1880 whales were scarce and existence was less secure until the 1920s, when fox trapping became profitable.

Cumberland Sound's population is now almost a thousand, close to estimated pre-whaling numbers. Before commercial whaling began the Inuit lived in eight or ten scattered camps; settlement is now concentrated at the modern town of Pangnirtung.

Flexible response to changing circumstances has always been essential to Arctic life for the Inuit. The seal and caribou remain vital in the local economy, even though innovations from the south (especially the outboard motor) have been eagerly adopted, just as the rifle and whaleboat were six generations ago. Of all the changes made over that time, none can have taken the Inuit so completely by surprise as the upheaval that followed the last voyage of the *McLellan*. ◆

Inuit with baleen.

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All photographs by Philip Goldring and Dmitri Goldring. Drawing on page 44 courtesy of The Whaling Museum, New Bedford, Mass.

A small Inuit family vanished over 40 years ago;
A few sad mementoes remain to tell their story . . .

Relics of an Arctic Life

By Robert McGhee

The story of Kangualuk is well known in the Inuit communities of Melville Peninsula and northern Baffin Island. About 40 years ago this man and his family lived in a camp on the barren west coast of Baffin Island. Since the sealing was poor along this coast, they moved inland during the winter in order to hunt caribou. Some time later, they and another family were returning to their coastal camp when Kangualuk's wife fell ill and the family decided to stay behind, planning to catch up with the others within a few days. When they did not do so, the husband of the other family returned to search for them. They were not found, and their grieving relatives assumed that the entire family had starved in the little-travelled regions behind Piling Bay.

This version of the story was related to me by Kenn Harper, a long-time resident of the area, who had heard it from several Inuit sources. Harper was visiting the National Museum of Man's research laboratory in order to look at an archaeological collection which had been recently brought to the museum by Captain James Macfie of 427 Tactical Helicopter Squadron. Captain Macfie had originally telephoned the museum to ask us to look at a collection of archaeological material which he had picked up on Baffin Island the previous summer. Initially I had not been very enthusiastic. Archaeologists generally do their best to discourage people from haphazardly collecting relics from the past, not only because this material is usually soon lost in attics or basement storage rooms, but also because most artifacts lose much of their meaning when removed from the context in which they were found. In this case I had further reservations. As Captain Macfie mentioned a few of the things which he had found, I began to wonder whether he had accidentally picked up a cache left by some living person who might return for it next year. As archaeologists become more interested in investigating the recent past, they have to deal with the fine but very important distinction between archaeological collecting and theft.

As soon as Macfie opened his box of finds, I knew that I had been wrong. The objects in the box certainly belonged to no living person, and they were not the random assortment of junk which archaeologists too often see in the hands of collectors who can usually not remember which pieces came from which site. Captain Macfie was obviously concerned with having disturbed an archaeological site, but with increasing helicopter traffic in the area he was worried that others would do so and that the material at the site would soon be scattered and lost. What he had salvaged from an Arctic beach was a unique historical document giving us insights into a way of life which is now dead except in stories — the camp life of the pre-World War II Inuit, the grandparents of the present generation.

The circumstances of the find are best reported by Captain Macfie himself, as told in a letter which he wrote a few weeks later:

> During part of August of 1979 I flew a military helicopter in support of the Armed Forces Mapping

Photo of a group of boys printed from a negative found in the cache.

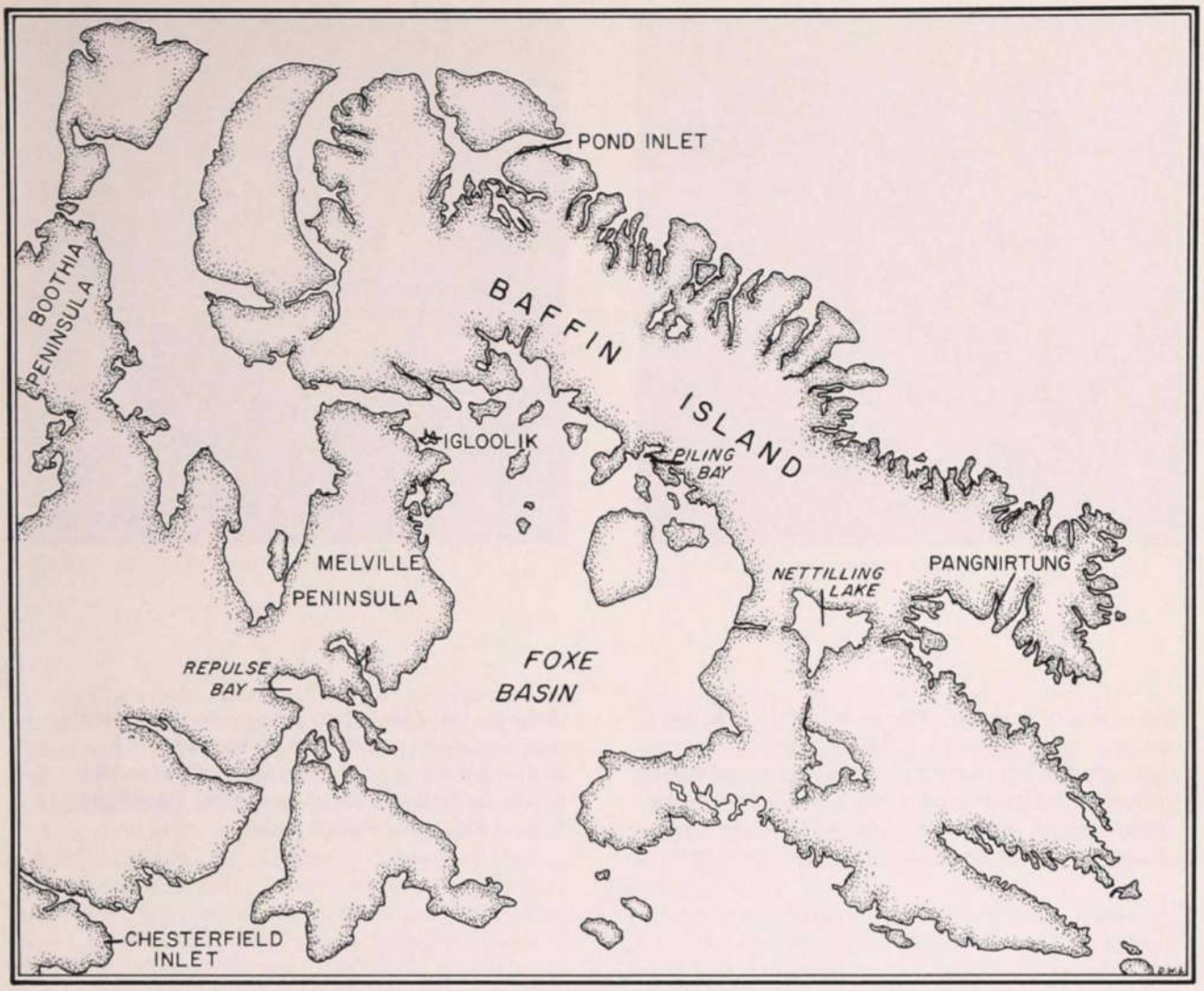
and Charting Establishment. We worked from temporary bases located at Longstaff Bluff, Pond Inlet and Clyde River, all in northern Baffin Island.

I had been on the lookout for tent-rings during the few occasions that our tasks took us over likely terrain at low altitude, and had once spotted one but time and fuel available did not permit a stop. On the evening of 11 August I was returning a party of surveyors to Longstaff Bluff from a mission on Prince Charles Island. En route we were forced by fog to spend a night on the sea coast at approximate position 68°44′ N, 74°43′ W. We travelled both mentally and physically prepared for such events.

After supper, four men bedded down in the helicopter, and I underneath. Next morning, after a 200 yard walk to a small lake and back with a bag of fresh water, I got breakfast started. The weather being still foggy, and the rest of the party still sleeping, I decided to take a short walk along the coast. After about 30 paces I was thrilled by the sight of a tent-ring, and a second one about 20 paces further on; the fog at that moment concealed three more tent-rings spaced equidistantly along the coast.

The moss and lichen associated with the rocks forming the first ring suggested a history of some decades, so I spent a few minutes searching the first four; the yield was much cracked caribou bone, a few teeth, and a very few spent .22, .25-35 and .30-30 cartridges. The fifth ring contained a wooden trunk inverted, with the bottom removed and lying nearby in pieces. An empty wooden box of construction similar to the trunk lay nearby. The trunk contained a number of cigarette and tobacco tins, a few children's toys, and other family items. There was no evidence of the site having been visited by humans since the abandonment of the trunk. Other household items such as a cast iron kudlik (oil lamp), a small tinned cooking pot with tight-fitting lid, an enamelled metal saucer and one split crockery mug lay nearby.

The trunk may have succumbed to the elements or may have been opened by a curious bear. The



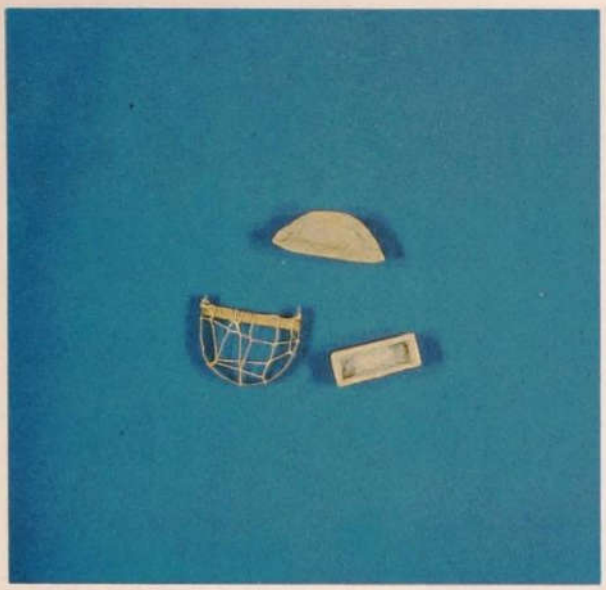
contents of the cans were damp, but seemed otherwise to be as their owners had left them. Preservation may have been enhanced by proximity to the sea, which contained many large cakes of ice of several tons in weight. Any mould in evidence on the paper items probably grew after I had removed them to a warm building. I was unable to complete the drying of the lot for approximately 10 days, due to the pace of our primary job.

I did not have a camera with me at the time of discovery, but had one back at the aeroplane. I didn't wish to attract the attention of the others in the party until I had decided what to do. There was a good chance that I would not be able to revisit the site, but was torn between leaving the whole thing intact until I could perhaps get back with a camera and black-and-white film (the one in the helicopter was loaded with colour film) or to remove material before someone else did. I chose the latter course, but took a few colour pictures.

Back at the museum, we began to unpack the box which Captain Macfie had left with us. The first items which we noticed were those which one would expect to find around the abandoned camp of an Arctic hunting family: a small brass telescope, pocket flashlight, nickel match case, a bullet-mould now seized with rust, and several net-sinkers made by drilling holes through chunks of ivory and stone. Women's equipment was represented by an ulu and scraper, both home-made with wooden handles attached to steel blades, a large cast iron oil lamp and a soapstone wick trimmer. Some of the items were more surprising, such as a small portable phonograph in excellent condition, and a few records in a flat metal box. Most intriguing were 20 tin cans and boxes, mostly tobacco or cigarette tins,

Items from the cache. The wooden box (above) contains papers, mostly Biblical verses. Above right are two cigarette papers with Biblical verses printed in syllabics and a small hand-sewn book containing 83 verses. Illustrated below are some of the many picture postcards in the collection.

Tobacco tins (above) contain picture postcards, toys and an assortment of other materials. Below are some of the artifacts found in the cache, including a brass telescope, flashlight, pocket knife and match holder.



Miniature drying-frame, soapstone pot and lamp.

Cast iron oil lamp, lamp trimmer, two scrapers and a package of needles.

containing a great assortment of odds and ends: needles, glass beads, bits of coloured yarn, a thimble, a pair of brass buttons from a Royal Northwest Mounted Police uniform, a safety razor, two toy lamps carved from soapstone and a toy drying rack made from wood and sinew, a small tin whistle, plastic pan-pipes, two tiny china dolls, five clay marbles, a magnifying glass, a pocket watch with the mechanism missing, the shell of a bird's egg, two limpet shells, a small enamelled brass pin labelled "Government Inspector, Imperial Munitions of War Service", two small animal tooth pendants, two large insect pupa cases, a plastic comb and so on. Such a mixed set of toys and curios must have been typical of the possessions of Inuit families who made annual or at most semi-annual journeys to trading posts several hundred kilometres from their home areas.

The contents of six flat cigarette boxes showed that the family collected other things as well. Most interesting are a set of photographs and photographic negatives. Five of the negatives, although badly stained, could be printed and turned out to show views of two northern settlements and three groups of Inuit. The photographic prints, mostly of snapshot size, show the same two settlements, two portraits of Inuit children, three "class photo" type groups of children standing in front of a wooden building, a group of Inuit men in European clothing aboard a ship, three photos of white men taken somewhere in the South, and several small, perhaps family, groups of Inuit. The two settlements shown in the photographs have been identified as Pond Inlet and Pangnirtung. The photos seem to have come from a number of sources, since they are of different sizes and styles. A few have English writing on the backs, suggesting that they had been acquired from whites. Others are labelled in Inuit syllabics: "Inuit" on the back of a photo showing a group of people; "Igloo" describes a picture of a wooden building; "Pangnirtung" labels a view of the mission at that settlement.

Some of the boxes contained pictures cut from magazines, labels from beer bottles, miniature playing cards and cards with pictures of dogs, and many postcards showing English scenes. Most of the postcards had been used and then either pasted back-to-back or the back pasted over with flowered wallpaper. Many of the backings have peeled off, revealing that most of the cards had been originally sent between 1908 and 1931 to ladies in various parts of England; some of these ladies had rectory addresses, and these cards and other pictures must have been collected by mission societies and sent overseas for the instruction or amusement of the Inuit. One is tempted to wonder what the recipients made of some of the cards, such as one depicting "Railway Disaster, Tonbridge 1909". Other indications of the religious interests of the family can be discerned from the set of five gramophone records. These contain sermons and hymns (including "Jesus Loves Me" and "Praise God from Whom all Blessings Flow") in the inuttitut language, and seem to represent a 30 minute Anglican church service. According to ex-Hudson's Bay Company traders Alex Stevenson and Alf Copland, these recordings were made during the 1920s by Rev. E.J. Peck; during the 1920s

Photograph of couple identified as Kutsiiq and his wife Niaqutsiaq taken from the cache.

View of Pond Inlet printed from one of the negatives in the cache.

and 1930s they were sold through the Hudson's Bay Company stores and were a very popular item.

Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of the collection is the amount of written material which it contains. Virtually all is in the Inuit syllabic orthography and seems to have been devoted to religious writings. A small book with oilcloth covers and pages of lined exercise-book paper has been sewn together and contains 83 Biblical verses neatly printed in pencil. Verses are also printed on old envelopes, scraps of paper and even cigarette papers. A small piece of paper bears the date 27 May 1939 in both syllabics and Roman orthography, and contains a list of New Testament books in both styles of writing. A "Scripture Union" membership card signed "Arnaguak" contains a calendar for 1934 with suggested readings for each day of the year; all but two days in late November are conscientiously marked off.

What can we make of this curious amalgam of camp equipment, toys and religious objects? They can make sense only within the context of what we know of the history of the area in which the people who owned them lived their lives, and may even contribute to our knowledge of this history. In aboriginal times the Inuit of the Foxe Basin region could be divided into three culturally similar but geographically distinct groups: the Tununermiut of northern Baffin Island, the Iglulingmiut of northern Foxe Basin, and the Aivilingmiut of Melville Peninsula as far south as Repulse Bay. The British explorer Parry first contacted these people in 1822, and estimated a population of about 500 people in the region. The 1922 census made by the archaeologist Therkel Mathiassen showed a remarkably similar population size, but over the intervening century there had been a great deal of population movement and cultural change.

Throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century, and up to the beginning of World War I, the major agent of change was the annual influx of Scottish and American whalers who hired Inuit both on their ships and as hunters to provide food for the wintering whaling crews. Increasingly through time, the whalers also carried trade goods to exchange for furs, and for whalebone and oil as Inuit gradually acquired their own whaleboats and whaling gear. The existence of the whaling fleet drew Inuit to the whaling grounds and to areas where the ships wintered, and away from their traditional hunting pursuits and home areas. The fleets attracted not only the original occupants of the area, but groups from outlying regions as well: Quaernermiut from the Barren Grounds around Baker Lake, Netsilingmiut from Pelly Bay and Boothia Peninsula, and Hudson Strait Inuit who came as hunters with the whaling ships. Throughout the whaling period there were thus extensive movements of people through the region, and an increasing mixture of populations. By the time that the bottom dropped out of the whalebone market, traders were establishing fur trading posts on the borders of the region: free traders at Pond Inlet as early as 1903, and Hudson's Bay Company posts at Chesterfield Inlet in 1911 and by 1921 at Repulse Bay, Pond Inlet and Pangnirtung. In 1938 the H B C opened a post at Igloolik, closing it four years later after ice had prevented re-supply ships from reaching the post since 1940.

During the whaling and early trading period the Inuit of the region acquired an increasing number of European artifacts, and became increasingly involved in a trading economy. By the 1930s Inuit camp life in Foxe Basin involved a mixture of native and imported equipment and techniques. Although people still wintered in traditional turf houses and domed snow houses, the canvas tent was replacing the traditional style of skin tent. The wooden whaleboat had pretty well replaced the kayak, the rifle had supplanted the bow, and steel traps had superseded traditional stone traps. Clothing of duffle and cotton was gradually taking the place of skin clothes, although caribou skin was still used extensively for winter clothing. Although most of the year was spent in traditional hunting, the selection of hunting areas was to some extent governed by the need to trap fox and to make annual or semi-annual journeys to a trading post to acquire ammunition, new weapons and traps, needles and clothing material, tobacco, and other essential goods and novelties. Also, the trading posts had to a large extent replaced the older seasonal gathering places as centres for the social activity and information exchange necessary to all peoples.

Although the Foxe Basin Inuit were acquiring more European goods in exchange for their furs, during the 1920s and 1930s there were fewer Europeans in the area than during the whaling period, and direct contact with Europeans was considerably less than it had been in earlier generations. Nevertheless, European ideas as well as material were moving into the region. When Mathiassen visited the area in 1922 he found that most of the people were literate in the syllabic orthography which had been adapted to the inuttitut language by Rev. Peck, the children being taught by their mothers and literacy spreading far ahead of European teaching.

Christianity was introduced to northern Foxe Basin in 1920 by Umiq, an Anglican native of Pond Inlet who had moved to the area and rapidly converted a large part of the population. Mathiassen was of the opinion that the new religion would rapidly die out, once the novelty had worn off, unless reinforced by missionary activity. Such activity was slow in reaching the area. Fr. Turquetil had started a mission at Chesterfield Inlet to the south in 1912, but this seems to have had little influence on the Foxe Basin people until 1931, when Fr. Bazin opened a Roman Catholic mis-

A group pictured in front of the first Anglican mission at Pond Inlet.

sion near Igloolik. The Anglicans established a mission at Pangnirtung in 1926, replacing their 30 year mission on Blacklead Island in Cumberland Sound, and another at Pond Inlet in 1929. In Foxe Basin however, the first visits by an Anglican missionary were brief sled trips to the area in 1938 and 1941 by Canon Turner. In view of this history, it is perhaps surprising that the Anglicanism introduced 20 years earlier by Umiq had not only survived in the area, contrary to Mathiassen's prediction, but had apparently flourished and was obviously very important to the people who left the cache on the coast of Piling Bay.

What do we know of the people who left this cache, aside from what can be deduced from their belongings? As far as my limited research reveals, there are unlikely to be many written records relating to the event. There are, however, records in the memories of the Inuit of the region. Although I have not been able to visit the area, Fr. Guy Mary-Rousselière of Pond Inlet kindly consented to inquire among the local people.

According to local traditions, the cache was probably left by a man named Kangualuk, his wife Palluq and their adopted children Qaunnaq and Ukkangut, who attempted to spend the winter of 1942-43 hunting caribou in the area of Nettilling Lake, and were not heard from again. It was generally assumed that the family had starved to death in the very poor region, although a variant account states that an aircraft had landed at their starvation camp and taken the family to the Soviet Union, from whence the son had recently visited Canada as part of a touring delegation from the U.S.S.R. Unfortunately, it seems very unlikely that the latter version of the story could be true, although it is interesting to note that at about this time Baffin Island was being investigated as part of the Northeast Staging Route to ferry military aircraft from North America to the war zones of Europe.

The only written mention of the tragedy was located by Fr. Rousselière in the Pond Inlet Roman Catholic Mission Journal. On 27 May 1944 Fr. Danielo, who had just received the news from Igloolik, wrote that *"La famille entière de Kangualuk semble bien definitivement perdue du coté de Piling-Netsilik Lake."*

Fr. Rousselière was also able to obtain more precise information on the family. Kangualuk was born in 1910, the son of Killak and Tatiggak; he is probably one of two children listed in Mathiassen's 1922 census as living with his mother and stepfather in Steensby Inlet on the northwestern coast off Baffin Island. His wife Palluq, born in 1906, is probably one of three children listed in the same census living with her Tununermiut parents Ululiarnak and Uutaq at Pond Inlet. It is interesting to note that both families were associated with Baffin Island at that time, rather than with the Melville Peninsula side of Foxe Basin.

Our slight historical knowledge of northern Foxe Basin helps to put the event at Piling Bay in some perspective. In the late nineteenth century, Cumberland Sound Inuit told the anthropologist Franz Boas of a people named Pilingmiut who lived in this area, and whom they occasionally met while hunting in the interior of Baffin Island near Nettilling Lake. When Mathiassen visited in 1922 he could find no trace of this group, and the area around Piling Bay was unoccupied. During the late 1930s the caribou of Melville

Peninsula began to decline, perhaps as a result of overhunting with firearms. Some groups began making autumn caribou hunts on the Baffin Island side of Foxe Basin, an area generally avoided because of poor sealing and the unreliability of other game resources. In 1940 several Iglulingmiut groups spread to new sites throughout their area, perhaps in order to trap more fox at the encouragement of the newly-arrived traders, and the reoccupation of Piling Bay was probably a part of this general movement. In 1942 the RCMP removed a number of families from the region because of the threat of overhunting the local caribou population. In 1949 there was starvation at another camp near Piling Bay, and the area was once more abandoned.

The cache found by Captain Macfie is consistent with the story remembered by local people. The material appears to be the possessions of a single family, and the cracked caribou bones scattered about the site indicate that these people were engaged in hunting caribou. The cache appears to date from the right time period: the postcards in the collection bear postmarks as recent as 1931; the photograph of the Anglican mission at Pangnirtung must have been taken after its establishment in 1926; the Scripture Union card is dated 1934; a piece of Revillon Frères letterhead paper was probably obtained from the post operated by that company at Repulse Bay between 1924 and 1936; a picture torn from a magazine shows an antiquated military tank with *"No Tirar Hermanos"* (Don't shoot, brothers) painted on the side, and must date from the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39; an undated Hudson's Bay Company invoice for cartridges shipped from Nelson River to Igloolik must have accompanied either the 1939 or 1940 shipments to that post; two scraps of paper containing Biblical writings are dated 1939 and 1940; the latter is the most recently dated item in the collection.

Many of the items in the cache, however, seem to date to a much earlier period. The RNWMP buttons, for example, were obsolete in 1920 when the name of the force was changed to RCMP.

Alex Stevenson and Alf Copland were surprised to note that many of the items were not carried as stock in the trading posts of the period. They suspected that some of the objects — such as the cast iron oil lamp, which appears to be unique — may have been obtained from whalers at an earlier period. Despite the relatively small size of this cache of family belongings, it seems to represent material collected from numerous sources over a period of decades, a small personal museum of things thought useful or interesting enough to preserve despite a nomadic style of life.

It seems appropriate that such a collection should eventually have found its way to a museum, after lying abandoned on an arctic beach for almost 40 years.

Photograph of two white men found in the cache.

Captain Macfie has donated the collection, with the permission of the descendants of Kangualuk's family, to the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre in Yellowknife. ♦

Robert McGhee is an archaeologist with the National Museum of Man, Ottawa.

Burnishing the Legends

BY CHRISTOPHER DAFOE

COMPANY OF ADVENTURERS
By Peter C. Newman. Viking (Penguin Books Canada Ltd.), Toronto, 1985. 413 pp., illus. $25.00.

Few things in this dangerous world are as precariously placed as a company engaged in business. In the world of commerce, failure, over the long haul, is more common than success. Some firms flourish for a time, profits are made for fifty years or a century, time passes, shareholders rejoice — and then the wind shifts and the edifice is blown away like chaff on the wind. The ghosts of lost tycoons haunt the counting house and howl over lost charters.

History cooly records the fall of many great commercial empires. The East India Company, The Africa Company and The South Sea Company all flourished and cast great shadows for a time, but the wind blew on them and they sank, the profits dispersed, the ledgers lost.

On the day of its founding, many predicted a short, unhappy and unprofitable life for The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson's Bay, known to us as the Hudson's Bay Company or "The Bay". Royal patronage was all very well, but the monarch himself was living on credit. It might be an advantage to have a royal relation as your governor, but who could or would care to conduct business on the brink of a frozen sea at the very edge of the map? A company launched into a trackless wilderness of snow seemed an unlikely enterprise, even if the demand for beaver hats continued. Over the long term, it couldn't last. Prince Rupert would find something else to interest him. He always did.

Over 300 years have passed and some people are still saying that the Hudson's Bay Company has little hope of survival. It seems unlikely, however, that the old Company, having come this far with great difficulty, will elect to expire. It has seen the best and worst and along the long road it has learned how to endure. The strong leaders keep appearing, just when all hope seems to be lost.

The observation is often made that the history of Canada is, to a great and remarkable extent, the history of the Hudson's Bay Company as well. The letters "HBC" may not, in fact, stand for "Here Before Christ", but the fact remains that in many parts of Canada the Company *was* here before Christ. The traders were already well established and deep in the life of the land when the missionaries arrived and much of the nation's history had already been written in the ledgers and journals of the Bay traders.

The Company has not only been a major participant in Canadian history, it has exerted a singular influence on the Canadian mind and soul as well. Something of what we are comes to us through our long and not always comfortable association with one of the most remarkable and in many ways most unlikely enterprises in the history of commerce.

It is not at all surprising that Peter C. Newman, who has already demonstrated his interest in business and power in such works as *The Canadian Establishment*, should turn, at last, to what might be called the preeminent story of business and power, the story of the Hudson's Bay Company, that great and exceedingly old pillar of the Canadian Establishment, the company, in Newman's words, that became a nation.

Newman is clearly fascinated by the business side of the HBC story, and he has asked the questions that one would expect in a book about business — What was the Company's work? How did it survive? — but those ledgers and journals have more in them than lists of profit and loss and Newman has caught a glimpse of the glory concealed in those old pages.

It has been said so often that Canadians are a dull people with a dull history that many Canadians actually believe it. Peter C. Newman has written *Company of Adventurers* for them. This is not the definitive account of the Hudson's Bay Company, replacing earlier, scholarly efforts by such historians as E.E. Rich and Glyndwr Williams and the many other learned accounts of various aspects of the fur trade and the exploration of the North and West. Indeed, Newman has turned to many of these experts for assistance and information.

Company of Adventurers was clearly not designed to serve as a teaching text in schools and universities and it should not be judged as such. Newman, I suspect, would be the last to claim that he has told the *whole* Hudson's Bay Company story in minute and painfully researched detail, giving a full account of the day to day progress of the Company over three hundred years, including a complete reckoning of the pelts exchanged and the trade goods supplied over long seasons on the Bay and inland. Others have taken on that task and their work is proceeding well. Newman, in fact, is doing something quite different in *Company of Adventurers*.

We Canadians have accomplished much, but we are a painfully diffident people, modest to a fault. For much of our history we have been in awe of others, first the British and latterly the Americans. Our own national story, dimly perceived, seemed pale and feeble in comparison to the great exploits of others. We saw ourselves as a nation waiting for its history to happen. Identity and self-knowledge waited upon events.

A task of the popular historian is to put ordinary people in touch with their heritage, or, at least, with the essential elements of their history. The academic historian looks for truth in the jumbled attic of the past, yearning to know *exactly* what happened and what it signified. The popular historian, the burnisher of legends, is only partly concerned with a bald account of what happened in history. *Company of Adventurers* is an example of the sort of book that goes, in a way, *beyond* history into the coloured world of national legend and dream.

Peter C. Newman is a man enamoured of heroes. He has looked for them in the contemporary marketplace and now he is looking for them and finding them in the shadowland of Canadian history. Academics may be impatient with the "great man" notion of history, but for many ordinary people the house of the past is entered most easily on the shoulders of a larger-than-life figure from the national dreamtime.

The story of Canada has been a story of survival against difficult odds. Canadians are frequently told — by other Canadians and by outsiders — that our nation is an unlikely survivor. The climate is too extreme, the geography too difficult, the population too thinly scattered. Canada has been dismissed as "a few acres of snow" and "a sanctimonious ice-box", but here we are, surviving, getting to know ourselves and likely to continue doing so. The Hudson's Bay Company, facing similar disadvantages and problems, has survived as well when other, more promising ventures have gone to the wall. Is this an unusual form of tenacity or are we simply too numb to notice what we are enduring?

Perhaps something of the same spirit of defiant survival has kept both Company and nation alive against all odds; the Company enduring and plodding on beside its frozen sea, the nation dreaming its winter dreams at the frozen end of a continent. By now it should be clear that we Canadians are a company of adventurers, in every sense of the term. That, in part, is what Peter Newman's book tells us.

The first volume, which deals with aspects of the first century or so of the Company's struggle for survival, offers a sort of panoramic view of the major events of the period. It is in the big "set-piece" chapters on Hearne and John Rae, however, that Newman gets closest to his essential theme. These giants, too little known to Canadians, struggled with and mastered the harsh land. They are important totem figures in the Canadian legend. They were British and they returned to Britain when their tasks were done, but Canada was the making of them and what they accomplished in the world was shaped by the landscape and by their Canadian experience. Their stories are part of the Canadian story.

The story of the early years of the Hudson's Bay Company is one of those "oft told tales". A number of popular accounts have been written over the years. Canadians, however, have short memories and it seems necessary to tell the story again in every generation. New information and new interpretations of events come to the fore as the years go by, but the essential outlines and the main cast of characters remain more or less constant.

Familiar figures move through the pages of Newman's *Company of Adventurers* : Prince Rupert, Radisson and Groseilliers, King Charles, d'Iberville, Kelsey, Knight, Henday, Dobbs, Hearne, Norton, Matonabbee, the Orcadians and all the other vivid and attractive figures that moved across the Company stage in the early years. Their stories are told in a lively, engaging, richly coloured style, although there is an occasional tendency to apply the gilt too heavily. An over-ripe turn of phrase can make the fastidious reader groan aloud, but these literary lapses are rare. When Newman is writing about someone who has really captured his imagination — Prince Rupert, Hearne, Dr. Rae — the prose leaps off the page. These chapters, which represent the heart and soul of the book, have the richness and colour that is found in the romantic "historical" essays of Lytton Strachey [Eminent Bay Men?].

Scholars may well complain that the narrative occasionally passes too swiftly over matters that cry out for deeper examination and there is a tendency, particularly in the early chapters, to skate rather quickly over the surface of things. At the same time, it is possible to understand the need to keep the story moving, even at the risk of making too light of some important matter. Such flaws are inevitable in a popular work that attempts, as Shakespeare put it, to place the accomplishments of many years into an hour glass.

Company of Adventurers does not attempt to replace the longer and more thorough accounts of Company and Canadian history. In its lively and entertaining way it opens the door to the house of history and summons the reader inside. Many will be inspired to delve deeper into the story through the works of Professor Rich and others. For some, this richly coloured vision of the past will be sufficient in itself. Newman has a great story to tell and he has told it vividly, but his greatest test will come with volume two.

A NATION AT WAR

By Walter Hildebrandt

A MILITARY HISTORY OF CANADA

By Desmond Morton. Hurtig Publishers, Edmonton, 1985. 305pp., illus. $19.95.

In 1980 Edgar Friedenberg argued in his controversial book *Deference to Authority* that Canadians lacked concern for outdated laws affecting the rights of the individual and that they readily accepted the dictates of authority figures. An American who came to Canada disillusioned by his own country's involvement in what he saw as an immoral war in Vietnam, he expected Canada to be a country where the rights of the individual against the state were firmly protected. He found that in Canada civil liberties even in peacetime were indifferently protected and that dormant statutes like the *War Measures Act* could still be revived to arrest hundreds and detain them without charge. What was perhaps most disturbing about the revival of the *War Measures Act* was that most Canadians supported what civil libertarians criticized as an arbitrary use of this wartime vestige. Desmond Morton suggests in this new book that Canadians still like to think of themselves as an unmilitary people. He argues, however, that this is not what our history tells us. He shows that, far from being an unmilitary people, Canadians have willingly and at times uncritically served the aims of at least two imperial powers: Britain and the United States. He implies that Canadians today as in the past have failed to define an independent and mature status. We have accepted what others imposed.

Morton has written this important book in a style that is easily accessible. His expertise over the years in the field of military history is perhaps rivaled only by George Stanley and C.P. Stacey and it makes this book academically respectable even though it is not footnoted. Its clear and concise presentation, however, will make this book of greatest interest to the nonexpert unfamiliar with Canada's extensive military past. In a tone similar to Friedenberg's, Morton implies that Canadians are uncomfortable with their military past. What is therefore particularly significant with the broad and sweeping overview that Morton provides is that it confronts Canadians with their military traditions.

Through what is for the most part a narrative style, Morton outlines the wars of the *Ancien Régime* and the British Empire — wars that left a lasting rift between the English and French cultures of this country. He outlines the problems of the "Young Dominion" as the entrenched military establishment of Upper Canada wrestled with difficulties of volunteer militias and defence policy. The first real test of the "Young Dominion" came against its own Indians and Metis people in 1885. Morton provides a clear if brief explication of the part played by the military in the subjugation of our native populations. He then presents the sobering political consequences on French — English relations that were again excerbated during the Boer War as a result of Canada's "ready aye ready" stance. The South African War saw the beginning of what Morton calls: " . . . a naive military

The Diaries of Edmund Montague Morris: Western Journeys 1907 – 1910

Transcribed by Mary Fitz-Gibbon

During the summers of 1907 through 1910 Canadian artist Edmund Morris painted the portraits of Canada's Plains Indians, while in his diary he chronicled the way of life and history of these people. He recorded, in pastel and pen, the last generation of the Plains Indians to hunt the buffalo. Throughout his diary, members of the Blackfoot, Assiniboine, Cree, Saulteaux, and Stoney tribes tell their own stories.

For more than 65 years, this important written record has been stored at the Royal Ontario Museum, its information obscured by the cryptic handwriting of the author. Eight years of patient unravelling of the texts has enabled the publication of the entire contents of the diary, containing first-hand accounts of incidents, legends, and beliefs.

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enthusiasm in Canada. Newspapers boasted of Canadian exploits and suppressed most criticism of Canada's defects. Readers thrilled to the courage of four young men from Pincher Creek who held off fifty Boers until all were dead or wounded." Only 242 Canadians lost their lives in South Africa.

This naive enthusiasm was lost after World War I in which 60,661 men and women lost their lives. Without embellishment Morton depicts the horror of trench warfare. The incredible ineptitude of the unusually high number of officers both in the field and behind the lines is presented to fairly represent what Charles Harrison gave us in his fine book *Generals Die in Bed*. Canada's sorely inadequate technological development did little to help the cause of those who fought in the field. This war did much to shock Canadians into the 20th century. As Morton writes: "Canada's soldiers saw new tanks, anti-tank guns, and machine gun carriers — but only in newsreels."

Canadians made a substantial contribution to the war effort in World War II, but again not without a measure of bungling from politicians and officers anxious not only to show Canada's willingness to participate, but also now wanting to participate as a separate nation out from under the wing of the British. It was a less costly war in lives, but, as Morton indicates, there were other horrors of total war that survivors were left to reflect on. Trench warfare was outdated, but the lessons of war in the air had yet to be learned: "Canadians who were willing to pronounce Hong Kong or Dieppe as costly blunders are understandably hesitant to condemn an operation which continued relentlessly through most of the war. It was too painful to admit that 9,980 Canadians, to say nothing of many thousands of other airmen from every Allied nation, died to very little purpose." Yet, in spite of senseless losses, Canadians could be proud of their significant contribution in liberating Europe from the evils of fascism.

The last section "The Long Cold War" is an effective and provocative part of the book. It traces Canada's move out of the European and into the American sphere of influence. Canada's involvement in NATO and the Korean War illustrates this shift from serving one imperial master to another. Morton questions whether Canada even today has a clear-sighted independent course to follow on the world stage. He forshadows the Mulroney government's own crisis last summer with the American coastguard icebreaker the *Polar Sea* when he writes: "Canada's claim to ocean and Arctic space is no longer a matter of indifference in a world increasingly short of resources."

The narrative style of this book is appropriately and briefly interrupted throughout with incisive analysis in which the author explicates competing theories and interpretations. Morton also shows throughout how our military involvement in wars rarely fought on our own soil has irrevocably changed our politics, economy and social attitudes. More often than not, whether after the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919 or by government regulated economy after World War II, our way of life has been drastically reshaped by the aftermath of war. War also influenced social attitudes and fashions as usually conservative and insular Canadians saw Europe and brought back new ideas and in some cases even spouses from the old world. Morton also shows the less happy side of our military traditions which produced the racially motivated internment of the Japanese and the irrational roundup of perceived revolutionaries in Quebec and other parts of Canada during the 1970 October Crisis. The book is rounded out by an excellent annotated bibliography that will be of special interest to those pursuing military research of their own.

One might have wished that author and publisher could have provided more maps, especially of specific battles and more of general movements of armies in theatres of war during World War I and World War II. It would also have been more effective if the photographs had been integrated to complement the text at appropriate places and not just lumped together. Again, the history of native people is neglected in the very thin section devoted to "Indian Warfare". Though there is admittedly little, the author might have used the research in John Milloy's thesis "*The Plains Cree: A Preliminary Trade and Military Chronology*" (Carleton University, 1972). But these critcisms pale beside the achievement of this book. Morton, who also gave us *The Last War Drum, The Canadian General: Sir William Otter* and *Ministers and Generals*, has now given us what may be his most significant contribution to Canadian military history to date. Its easy accessibility both in price and readability should ensure a lasting contribution.

Walter Hildebrandt is a historian with Parks Canada. He is the author of The Battle of Batoche, published by Parks Canada in 1985.

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Barns in Our Past

By David Lasker

BARNS OF WESTERN CANADA
By Bob Hainstock. Braemar Books Ltd., Victoria, 1985. 143 pp., illus. $29.95.

Despite only 100 years of settlement, Western Canada has a rich inventory of traditional wooden barns. Bob Hainstock's *Barns of Western Canada* is a timely look at this fast-vanishing species. The book is a 50th anniversary *festschrift* for Manitoba Pool Elevators, with funding from the Canada Council, growing out of a series on barns that Hainstock, a journalist, wrote for the *Manitoba Co-operator.*

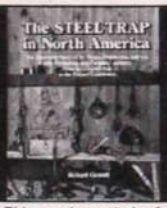
Hainstock was raised on a farm near Baldur, Manitoba, and logged nearly 30,000 miles while writing the book. His heart is in the right place, and I started *Barns of Western Canada* with high expectations: the handsome dust jacket, the high quality of printing and binding and the scores of photographs of abandoned barns standing amidst fields of stubble put me in a wistful mood.

Alas, the book is poorly written. The text alternates between inanities such as "the round barn stands apart from all others, telling us the original owner was a progressive fellow in his time," and pseudo-scholarly passages where undefined technical terms are prodigiously spewed forth:

> In the northern styles, two other layouts could be found: the "hallendielenscheune" which had three rows of interior pillars and often became a combination barn-byre-granary; and the "kubbung-dielenscheune" which had only two rows of pillars and remained a basic barn use throughout the years. Both styles had doors located in the gable ends, developed mainly from the 17th century when threshing floors became a part of barn design.

The awkward prose occasionally provides unintentional comic relief, as in the malapropism "dissect" (for "bisect"): "Howie could drive a fully loaded team wagon around the lower level's wide circular alley which dissected two rows of stalls," and "a long main road dissecting tightly clustered families." Another example is "Gingerboard," from "A visual delight for its three separate ramps, dormers, and cupolas, plus an unusual amount of fancy trims and Gingerboard." The author has unwittingly coined a portmanteau word combining "gingerbread" plus "bargeboard" (or "vergeboard"); his term is unlisted in *The Penguin Dictionary of Architecture* by Nikolaus Pevsner, et al.; *What Style is it?* by Poppeliers, et al.; *American Architecture Since 1760; A Guide to the Styles,* by Marcus Whiffen; or *Identifying American Architecture* by John Blumenson. These are standard reference works for architecture aficionados, available in cheap paper editions. Why didn't Hainstock consult them?

Redundancies abound ("bad fire hazard"), as well as frequent bouts of passive-voice disease. Who, for instance, encouraged the farmers in the following passage? "Almost all pioneer barns were [were what?] of log, either as unpeeled poles or dressed on two sides with broad axe and adze. Farmers were encouraged to replace early efforts with frame barns as quickly as possible." Another case: "One of the earliest



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barn forms was the three-bay, or English barn . . .It was easily built of log . . ." Easy compared to what? Easy for whom? ("Easy for Leonardo," is the snickering reply.)

There is a French film — I believe Jean-Luc Godard directed it — parodying American tourists trying to "do" the Louvre in half an hour. *Barns of Western Canada* tries to "do" nearly 300 barns in 144 pages, and never does the reader feel well-acquainted with any of them. Similarly, Hainstock tends to drop intriguing tidbits, only to dance away before explicating them. For example, the term "Red River frame" is introduced without being explained. Those words, "Red River," are drenched in associations for Manitobans. To pick two: Red River carts, which in the last century rode in tandem down Portage and Main, and Red River cereal. So just what is a Red River frame? Hainstock is not telling.

Another throwaway is figure 140, a plan for an octagonal barn (from Crown Lumber's pattern No. 3381). Hainstock misses this cue to launch into a fascinating tidbit of architectural Victoriana, though Eric Arthur and Dudley Whitney, in *The Barn*, devote a chapter to the subject. Briefly, the octagon was promoted in the 1840s as a health-giving shape by one Orson Squire Fowler, a New York phrenologist and author of *A Home for All, or the Gravel Wall and Octagon Mode of Building*, which went through six editions in eight years, and *Amativeness or Evils and Remedies of Excessive Sensuality*, which boasted forty printings.

When writing on architecture, comprehension of technical terms is well-nigh impossible without accompanying diagrams. On page 40, Hainstock discusses saddle-notching and dovetailing of corner logs; diagrams appear, for no particular reason, on page 77. The proper way to handle such material is demonstrated in John Rempel's *Building with Wood*, where copious diagrams, photos, and explanatory captions convey instant insight.

Hainstock's book lacks an overall organizing scheme. He could have chosen from among three approaches: chronological, geographic, or topical, but instead opted for a desultory, "mix-master" method. There is no index. More's the pity; an index would have given the reader a way out of the author's organizational muddle, and its absence mocks the book's pretentions as a useful reference work. A detailed, outline-form table of contents would have made an honourable second choice, but Hainstock's chapter headings are jejune rhetorical flourishes: Cultural Signposts, Shapes of Heritage, Materials of Progress, Mirrors of Diversity. Each heading is broken into three nebulous sub-headings. *e.g.* Mirrors of Diversity: Special Barns, Show & Sell, Historic Places.

One subheading, Bank Barns, piqued my curiosity. What is a bank barn? A rustic savings institution in the shape of a barn? A branch of the Altona Credit Union, perhaps? Or a barn used to store, or "bank" crops? Not being privy to the 4H Club set, I'd like an explanation. I'm still waiting.

Another useful feature in a book such as this is a glossary. It too was omitted, and given Hainstock's propensity for technical term name-dropping its absence is keenly missed. A Barn Notes appendix is provided, however, filled with human interest and poignant anecdotes. Consider, for instance, the notes for figure 100: "This photograph was taken the day the last of the Crandell family moved off the family farm." Why don't these notes accompany the photographs? Flipping pages back and forth is awkward.

Like the text, the photographs need editing. Expanses of cumulus clouds and wheat fields look lovely, but they should have been cropped. As a rule, the barn is a tiny figure within the photo composition. The barn in figure 80, for example, measures 1 inch by 1¼ inches; the plate measures 3 7/16 inches by 4¼ inches.

I've waited until the end of this review to reveal that Hainstock does have a thesis (but then, he makes the reader wait until page 50): there is no identifiably Western Canadian barn form. Barn fanciers recognize the New York Dutch barn, Pennsylvania and German barns, and even an Ontario barn. But, concludes Hainstock in Dick-and-Jane style, "no Manitoba barn. No Saskatchewan barn. No Alberta barn. No British Columbia barn."

David Lasker is a Toronto writer who specializes in architectural subjects.

COPLALOOK

CHIEF TRADER, Hudson's Bay Company 1923-1939

By A. Dudley Copland
Introduction by William E. Taylor Jr., President, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

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NORTHERN PROVINCES: A MISTAKEN GOAL

By Gordon Robertson. Institute for Research on Public Policy, Ottawa, 1985. $8.00.

Reviewed by Brian W. Lewis

Books on politics tend to be long, jargon-riddled and wordy. Gordon Robertson's volume is a model of clarity and precision, written dispassionately by a man who was the senior mandarin in Canada during the most turbulent period in its history. Although Mr. Robertson's book is analytical, it contains enough controversy in the title alone to provoke intense debate among northerners. Eight dollars is an expensive price to pay the Institute for Research on Public Policy for what is virtually an essay, carefully written and reasoned though it is. Despite the wide knowledge and experience of Mr. Robertson, or because of it, the book is really an argument for a continuation of the status-quo, offering little optimism for those who seek provincial status for the northern territories. Perhaps the thirty years of experience Mr. Robertson refers to in the preface has indeed produced "deepened ruts of repetition and bias" despite his hopes to the contrary.

Clearly, a man who was Commissioner of the Northwest Territories from 1953 to 1963, then Clerk of the Privy Council and Secretary to the Cabinet from 1963 to 1975 must have ideas about further northern development that are worth listening to. As Secretary to the Cabinet for Federal-Provincial relations until 1975 he must have developed a clear understanding of obstacles to be overcome if the northern territories are to enter Confederation.

Chapter three of the book is called, "The Holy Grail: Provincial Status." In twenty pages it explains what it means to be a province while at the same time pointing out obstacles to the attainment of provincial status north of sixty. To Mr. Robertson provincial status involves three key elements: a constitutional regime, a financial regime, and membership in the "Federal-Provincial Club" — the most prestigious club in the country.

The constitutional problem for the Northwest Territories is not one of power but of status, since power is something which can be conferred or delegated by whoever has it. Status is something else. Unlike the provinces, the territories have no basis in the written constitution "with a constitutionally defined role and with protection for its authority and powers guaranteed by an independent judicial authority." The powers of territories, however, are very much the same as the powers of provinces, the exception being in the ownership of Crown lands and control over natural resources.

To get into the prestigious "Federal-Provincial Club" is more difficult now than it was prior to the Constitution Act, 1982. When Newfoundland entered Confederation in 1949 it did so under the sole authority of the federal government. Today, the club decides who shall join and how the club rules can be changed. According to Mr. Robertson, the amending formula was designed to meet the particular needs of the club as it is now. In the arithmetic of Confederation regional interests are protected for Atlantic Canada and the Prairie provinces through the "blocking four" provision whereby the veto by four provinces could block an amendment. The creation of two or three new provinces would mean eight out of twelve or nine out of thirteen provinces would be needed to pass an amendment. The requirement for five provinces instead of four to block an amendment seriously undermines the possibility of veto by the four Prairie or four Atlantic Canada provinces.

NORTH OF SIXTY

By Brian W. Lewis

Under the old regime it seemed unlikely the federal government would have ever agreed to provincial status for the northern territories since it had no good reason to do so. Unlike Newfoundland, the territories were already well-established Canadian possessions. Under the present regime, according to Mr. Robertson, there will be even less reason to expect provincial status north of sixty. Under present constitutional arrangements the provinces themselves will wish to preserve the careful arithmetic of Confederation. His analysis bleakly announces the end of nation-building.

It is the lack of a strong financial regime, however, that the ex-commissioner cites as the biggest barrier to provincial status. He argues that under present Territorial/Federal fiscal arrangements, the "deficit grant" provided by the federal government to help cover actual costs incurred by the territorial government is a much higher percentage than what the six have-not provinces get through equalization payments. The poorest "have-nots" receive 30 percent of their revenue from equalization; the Northwest Territories on the other receives 68 percent of its revenue from the "deficit grant" So, argues Mr. Robertson, the territories should cling to their deficit grant and retain territorial status. What he misses out entirely in his argument is what the territorial calculation of revenue would be like if it included revenue from natural resources, a major part of the calculations of "have" provinces. Mr. Robertson hedges all around this one. First he says that in the North revenue from this source is unimportant since northern development is so limited. He then goes on to say that the calculation of revenue from resource development is "problematic." To further blacken the picture he argues that even if northern provinces were created they may not even get control over their resources. They may have to wait for twenty five years as Alberta and Saskatchewan did between 1905 and 1930. It is unfortunate that, having made financial considerations the main obstacle to

the creation of northern provinces, Mr. Robertson fails to make the argument.

Mr. Robertson makes a great deal about the tremendous cost of government north of sixty and the impossible task of determining how northern provinces would fit into an equalization formula designed for southern Canada where costs to the provinces are more uniform. He has made the assumption that any northern provinces would be automatically "have not" provinces while at the same time admitting that he can't prove the case one way or the other.

Mr. Robertson is a distinguished member of the Canadian Establishment who clearly knows the "blackball" rules of the most prestigious club in the country. The message I get from this slim volume is very clear. From at least one insider's point of view the doors are closed. The club will be accepting no new members.

Brian W. Lewis is Senior Executive Officer, Government of the Northwest Territories.

THE PACKET

Letters to and from The Editor

With this issue *The Beaver*, founded in 1920, begins a new stage in its long history. A quarterly for most of its life, the magazine will now be published six times a year. This increase in the frequency of publication will give the magazine a stronger presence in the marketplace, but, more important than that, it will make it possible for *The Beaver* to bring to its growing number of readers in Canada, the United States and abroad more of the well-researched, well-written, handsomely illustrated and interesting articles they have come to expect.

The exacting standards of the past will be maintained, but there will be a few changes. In this issue, for example, we reintroduce a special section called "The Packet", once and for many years a regular item in the magazine. The Packet will feature letters to and from the editor. Readers are encouraged to contribute to this section of the magazine if they have comments on articles, interesting items of information to share or if they wish to enlarge upon some point made in an article or review.

This issue also features a book review section that has been redesigned in order to give greater prominence to reviews.

Other innovations may be introduced in the months ahead, but old friends of *The Beaver* need not be alarmed. *The Beaver* has no ambition to transform itself into a mere peacock. Happy to be itself, *The Beaver*, as always, strives only to build the best lodge at its end of the river.

Christopher Dafoe,
Editor.

The Reindeer Project

Sir:

In the Autumn 1984 issue of *The Beaver* I was very interested in the article entitled "Pootoogook" in particular that part of it which referred to Amadjuak and the families of Laplanders who arrived there in 1921 together with their herd of reindeer.

In 1920 I was serving as Fourth Officer in *Nascopie* and upon sailing from Montreal in July we carried with us Storker T. Storkersen who was to investigate the possibility of introducing domesticated reindeer into Baffin Island. His report was a favourable one and the following year the plan was put into operation. A new vessel *Baychimo* had been acquired by the Company and I was appointed to her as Third Officer. In our itinerary that season we were, among other things, to establish new posts at Amadjuak, Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet. Arriving at Lake Harbour we embarked several families of Eskimos and on 3 August set out for unknown Amadjuak. I was appointed to take the Company's schooner *Nannuk* (based at Lake Harbour) ahead of *Baychimo* and sound the intricate channel leading in to Amadjuak and throw overboard at intervals empty oil-drums provided with suitable mooring to show the way. *Baychimo* arrived safely and anchored and the photograph on Page 40 of *The Beaver* is the exact spot at which Captain Falk, in command of *Baychimo*, Ralph Parsons and myself landed to choose the site upon which to erect the new post buildings.

Meanwhile *Nascopie* with Captain G. Mead in command had sailed for the Bay and after completing her various tasks there sailed for Cardiff and thence to Namso and Loppen in Norway to embark five hundred and fifty head of reindeer together with three families of Laplanders and then proceed direct to newly-established Amadjuak.

As there was at that time no chart of Amadjuak it was decided that while the new buildings were being erected Captain Falk, myself and a couple of deck-hands would carry out a survey of the anchorage and make a chart giving the main visual characteristics and depths of water. This was successfully completed and a copy was left at Port Burwell for *Nascopie* to pick up on her voyage to Amadjuak.

By 1923 it was becoming very apparent that the reindeer venture was a complete disaster. We visited Amadjuak that year in *Baychimo* of which I was then Chief Officer, and again in 1924 when both Ralph Parsons and Storkersen decided, upon seeing what was left of the reindeer, to close the project down. To this end we embarked all the Laplanders and finally landed them at Ardrossan, Scotland. Their arrival there aroused great curiosity — almost as much as when I was subsequently serving on *Nascopie* and we not only landed some live polar bears there but also an Eskimo woman in her native garb.

The Laplanders were sent by train from Ardrossan to Newcastle-upon-Tyne under the charge of Mr. Turner, Third Officer, *Baychimo*, and there handed over to the Norwegian Consul for onward repatriation.

I trust that the foregoing account will prove to be of some interest. I often think that it is a great pity that so much of the Company's past activities are hidden away in memoirs and not published more freely.

Captain F.W. Berchem,
HBC 1916 to 1931,
Saltcoats, Ayrshire,
Scotland.

Symbols from the Past

Sir:

Your readers may be interested in some notes I passed on to Dorothy Eber after reading her interesting article "Wall Hangings at Whale Cove" (*The Beaver*, Summer 1984).

The symbol on Martha Kukshuk's work, a cross with four splayed limbs, is known in historic European design as the *croix pattée* or *formée*. Before the twelfth century, heraldic devices such as these were needed to tell friend from foe, since in battle all were encased in armour.

For original peoples, the equilateral "cross" (a label commonly applied to this sign) has possessed mythological and religious meaning in relation to the sky, sun, weather, rain. For instance, Amerindians have used this device along with scrolls as seen in a Naskapi pouch in the Speyer Collection of the National Museum of Man, Ottawa. The Blackfoot use a similar symbol, sometimes on the tipi, for sleep, peace or the morning star. It is found among the Aleut design typologies. And the McCord Museum possesses a fine ulu whose ivory handle has this emblem incised in it.

The motifs that appear on the shaman Qingailisaq's qulituk show nine splayed blades on the larger, and six on the two smaller forming out from concentric circles. Quingailisaq was the father of Aua. This emblem, with eleven blades, forms part of the design on the side of a Koryak woman's funeral hat which is preserved in the Museye Antropologii i Etnografii in Leningrad. The back of Quingailisaq's robe has two panels of chevrons, and these are found in many cultures, *e.g.* on the ear flaps of a deerskin cap of the Chukchi.

It is a tribute to the power of the sub-conscious as well as to the conscious transmission of heritage that these symbols, from far away in space and time, reappear in historic times to enrich our lives, even though they cannot be explained.

Betty Issenman,
Guest Curator, Inuit Clothing,
McCord Museum,
Montreal, Quebec.

Fort Rupert

Sir:

I am certain that in the interests of accuracy the readers of *The Beaver* will appreciate knowing what I wrote about the differences between Governor Blanshard and Chief Factor Douglas on the Fort Rupert Affair of 1850-1. This has been quite overlooked by Mr. Ralston in his Summer 1985 review of *Gunboat Frontier*. I quote from my book at page 47, and the evidence comes from five items in the Hudson's Bay Company Archives as noted in footnote 49:

> Douglas shared Blanshard's concerns about the finely balanced white-Indian interplay at Fort Rupert and on Vancouver Island in 1850 and 1851. More specifically, he did not think Blanshard's actions against the Newitty were either ill-founded or excessive. "It is to be regretted that the Indians were not more severely punished," he wrote privately to Blenkinsop on 15 August 1851, "but I trust they have had a lesson they will not soon forget." He hoped, he told another company servant, that the punishments would "inspire respect" not "provoke ridicule." What he objected to was Blanshard's desire to hold the whole tribe responsible for the crime, because he had more foresight and greater local knowledge. This course, he wrote to Blenkinsop, was "as unpolitick as unjust and might lead to disastrous warfare with these savages." Like Blanshard, Douglas would have preferred moderate measures; by offering a reward the guilty might be brought to trial, and by punishing the guilty alone, goodwill with the tribe might be maintained. For these reasons he continued Blanshard's policy of appointing local magistrates when the colony's revenues would allow it.

Barry M. Gough,
Professor of History,
Wilfrid Laurier University,
Waterloo, Ontario.

Canada's Sweethearts

Voluptuous, but chaste, the theatrical Webling girls enchanted a generation of Canadians as they toured the young Dominion with their patriotic and uplifting stage presentations.

Betty C. Keller, the biographer of Pauline Johnson and Ernest Thompson Seton, tells the story of *The Chastely Voluptuous Weblings* in the March/April issue of *The Beaver.*

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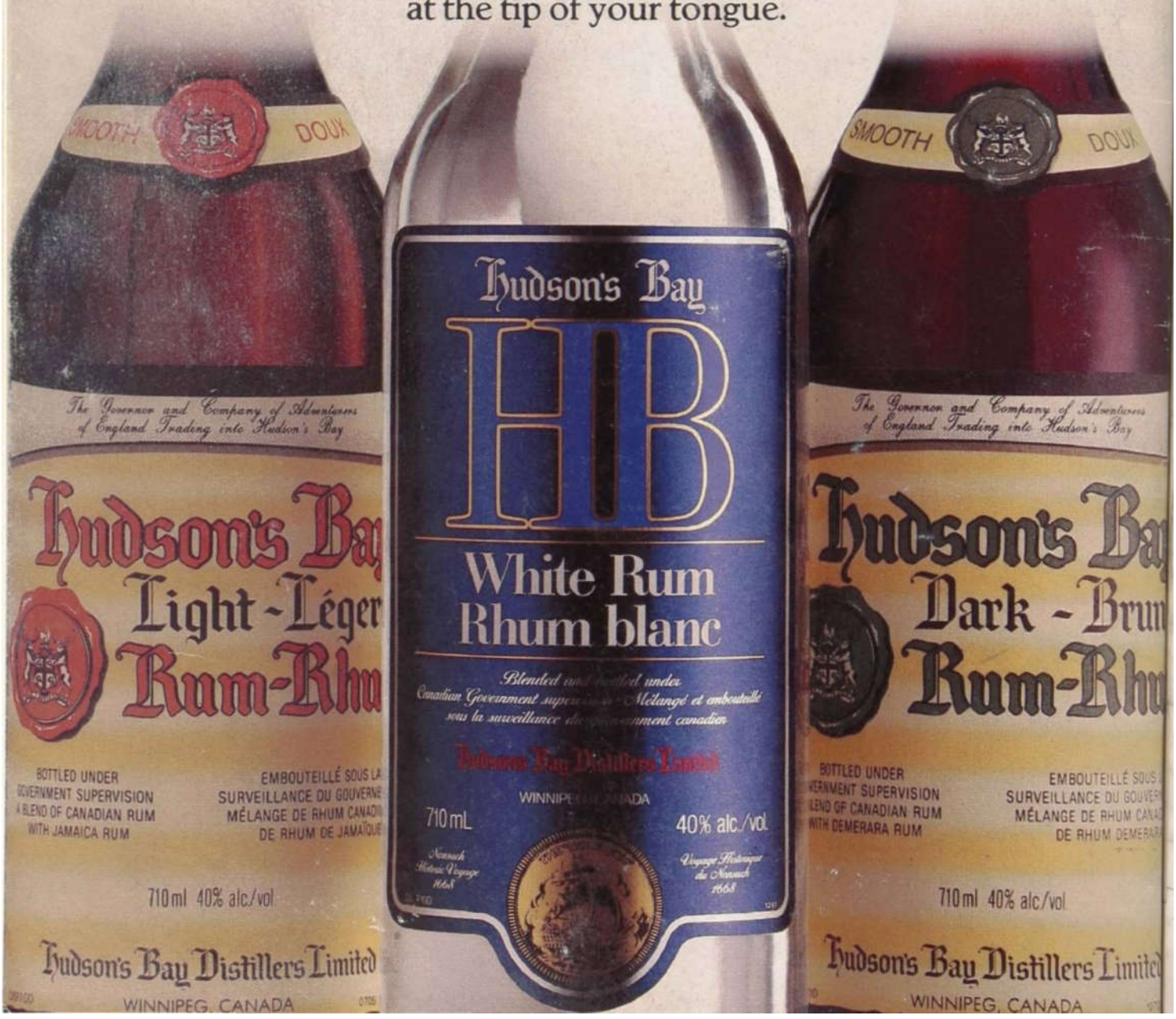
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